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[THE INTRODUCTORY.]

THYRA DESMOND;

OR,

THE MAIDEN OF THE LAKE.

CHAPTER XVIII.

When to the session of sweet, silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:
Then can I drown an eye unused to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since cancelled woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanished light.

"DEAR heart alive, what in the saints' name can take the young mistress to that gloomy old picture room," exclaimed Mike, as he returned from his duties in the saloon to the apartment, where he and some of the upper servants at Rosanne usually sat. "It's more than this morning that I have watched her going off in the mouldy old room, and it's myself who'd have liked to have brought her back to the sunlight and the warm hearts that waited for her, like the hare-bells for the dew. What does it mean, Mistress Bridget, for you're a wise woman, and you've reared the little colleen from her cradle, and it's you that should read her fancies aright?" he went on, with a mixture of complaint and reproach in his tone that was irresistible to the sensitive mind of the matron daughter of the Emerald Isle, who managed the domestic affairs at Rosanne.

"Truth, Mister Mike, and it's a purty joke you are playing," said the housekeeper, with a slight toss of her still comely head. "It's like y I can govern Sir Hilary's only daughter, and as might well happen his only child if the young master was to get into the throuble as he did but the other day. So Miss Erica told me.

"But I'll do your bidding for her sake as well as to please you, Maister Mike; and the darlint won't look black on me because I want to guard the Rose of Rosanne from the cold winds and blasts that have blown away the fairest blossoms of her race,"

she added, after a moment's pause, "during which she seemed to be studying the doubtful expressions of her companion's face, which had all the mobility if little of the beauty of his country's features.

"There's a jewel. It's a treasure of a wife you'll make when you say the word and I get Father Doolen to make us one, it is," said Mike, admiringly. "There go, as you say, Bridget, and you'll soon get the truth out of her with that honey tongue of yours, I'll be bail."

And Mike enforced his prayer by a bold salute that brought on his devoted head a tolerable proof that whatever might be the power of the good Bridget's tongue her fingers were by no means deficient in strength.

He wiped his tingling cheek as she disappeared and then with a comical and furtive smile, he set himself to furbish up to its highest polish some of the family plate which awaited his attention.

It was a true report that he gave to Mistress Bridget so far as Erica Vesoi's movements were concerned.

The girl was pursuing a very frequent task of hers of late and inspecting the fine old portraits in the picture gallery of the Vesoi race for the last three hundred years.

For so long had the family reigned at Rosanne, so long was its history carried down by the portraits of its successive generations.

There were knights and ladies, sons and daughters, brides and bridegrooms, in every possible character and costume, and it was an actual study of to go carefully and deliberately through those types and records of the past.

Erica passed slowly from one to the other of the fair dames and damsels of her ancestry, unconsciously perhaps that the hereditary type of the features of the Vesoi had descended to her young self, musing on the curious resemblance that existed between the various faces, while yet differing in age and dress and period so widely. But Erica, though she possessed in some sort a key to the principal portraits of the long time, was far more foggy in her ideas of those more recently painted

and nearer to her in kind. And it was on that period and in quest of that information she was now eagerly engaged. It was a fine old gallery, with the splendid colouring of the painted windows reflected on the paintings and statues and the dark oak flooring, that was glassy in its polish from long use and diligent rubbing for such a number of years.

There were cushioned seats at intervals, on which the spectator might repose or an ambitious copyist attempt to transfer the original to canvas. And the views from the tall lancet windows along its sides were beautiful enough to draw the attention from less fresh and glowing attractions.

Erica Vesoi, however, was too much bent on her object, or too familiar with the landscape to bestow much heed on aught but the inside of the long apartment.

Nor did she even perceive the near approach of Bridget Malone, as she cautiously stepped along the bright and slippery floor, till the good woman stood at her side.

"Ah, Miss Erica. It's a pretty face you're looking at, but not so good looking as your own," said the cautious woman as Erica turned suddenly round, "and, more, it's in your mirror that you'll find the best and the nicest pictures, my nurling," she went on, in her rapid racy brogue.

But Erica took little heed of her compliments.

"Bridget," she said, gravely, "you know most of these portraits, do you not?"

"Surely, Miss Erica, surely, I have not lived girl and woman in this house ever since my mother left the place, and didn't she tell me over and over again all the stories about the good looking gentlemen and ladies on the walls when she'd a spare hour from her duty, and there was more to see after them than there is now at Rosanne? I can tell you Miss Erica, there was company enough in those days, enough to spread over a year or so, such a time as we have now, more's the pity.

"Yes, yes, but that is not what I mean," said the girl, impatiently. "What I want to know is, whether you could tell me the names of these portrait

on this panel, and why there is a space between these two pictures that has not been filled up though there are more on the other side of grandpapa's portrait that might have been hung there."

"Bless me, Miss Erica, you're the strangest young lady, and that is it, you are," said the housekeeper, evasively. "Why, of course, it's not the way in real families to put the pictures like penny images at a show, just what looks best and comes first. There's other things to be thought of than that, Miss Erica, and there's no doubt that's why your grandfather—rest his soul—was not exactly by the next of his relatives, you see. There's his wife—as handsome a lady as need hang on a wall—and your own honored father and mother, and in course of time there'll be Mr. Brian and yourself, my Erica, when there's a painter fit to take ye and ye're old enough to be put among all these honorable company."

Erica listened with commendable patience. Perhaps she hoped some fact might come out in the flow of words to satisfy her eager curiosity. But the sequel proved her to be mistaken, and again she was fain to begin the queries afresh.

"Do you not know who it was—whose picture should have been there, Bridget?"

"Well, then it's myself that ought to be well acquainted with all that belongs to the Vesci's of Rosanne, Miss Erica," replied the woman, clearing her throat, as if for some special effort. "And it's not like that I should forget what I have been told, no, nor forget to ask, when I was in doubt. What was it you pleased to wish to know, Miss Erica?" she went on, with a demure look, that had something conventional in it, even to Erica's inexperienced ideas. It was no actual ring of truth in word or tone, or gesture.

"I told you more than once, Bridget; surely you cannot really misunderstand," said the girl, impatiently; "who ought to be there—why are you in such perplexity as to your reply, good Bridget? Is it a secret?"

"I—oh—dear no. The saints forbid that I should be in doubt or secret, where one of your race asks the questions, Miss Erica," returned the dame. "And, as to this blank, well it's best to tell the truth, though it's not always to be spoken. It was a lady fair and young, and bright as yourself. So I've heard my mother say. But, there, it's not to be spoken of out of the family, and no doubt you are enough of a Vesci to know that you must not betray the tale, Miss Erica, if I tell you what I know, and that's not much."

"If Oh, no, depend on it I won't, if you tell me under such circumstances, good Bridget," said the young girl, drawing herself up with the air of a princess. "Do you think a Vesci would be false to a given word, or cast a slur upon the name by any careless imprudence of hers?"

There was a saddened look in the woman's face as she gazed on her fair young mistress, which betokened some painful memory that thought or the expression conjured up.

But her voice was studiously cheery as she replied: "Dear, dear, no. How could you suppose such a thing, Miss Erica? All I meant was just this. Your papa has never told you at all at all about the story, and I did not like to be thought just a slave, as folks call it, to let out all I knew—and that's not much," she continued, crossing herself. "But still it's enough to be respected and to make a talk if it were known, and the more so because I can only say what was told to me."

"Well, well, I understand; I will take it as it stands, and as you tell it to me, Bridget," said Erica, impatiently; "only do not keep me in suspense when perhaps papa will call for me before you have finished your story."

"Oh, no. It's short enough to be soon finished, Miss Erica," said the woman, clearing her voice. "The tale's soon said, though the thing was not so soon done. The lady whose picture used to hang on that very nail, which you see in the ceiling, up there, Miss Erica, for you know that the nails are put in high that they may not spoil the paneling, or be in sight too prominent, you see, that lady, I say, was your great-aunt, your grandfather's sister, and the aunt of Sir Hilary."

"Well, and what did she do to be turned out of her place?" said the girl, recalling as she spoke the words of her father as to some transgression of his father's sister, that was to be a warning to herself.

"She married, or rather she ran away from her home, Miss Erica, for as to the marriage I can't pretend to speak. But, any way, she went away against the will and the laws of her own father, and was away some time, I can't tell how long. It might be weeks or months, or more, for aught I ever learned to the exact time. All I heard was that at last she was brought back to Rosanne—more like a ghost than a living woman. My mother said she should never have known her when she came back, though she had been in the house with her since

they were both girls. But she was not allowed to stay very long, nor to see strangers while at Rosanne—I mean she did not see any one except when her own kin or the woman who accompanied and waited on her was in the room."

"Poor thing! she did not seem to mind, so my mother said, for she lay calm and quiet like a stricken doe, her large eyes pleading for kindness and help as my mother thought, and her want was not much granted by those nearest to her as it seemed. Anyway it was no great while; her stay here was soon at an end," continued the good woman, sadly.

Erica shuddered at the terrible idea that came rushing on her mind.

"Surely she did not die? she was not murdered?" she whispered, suddenly.

"No, no; not quite so bad as that, Miss Erica," said the housekeeper, reproachfully. "You are the strangest young lady, I must say, that reads it; however, the day arrived when it was thought better she should leave Rosanne, and so she did, but not without the Spaniard, who was her guardian, as it seemed, and the maid who had acted as nurse. Off they went, and no one even bade them farewell or knew where they went. And, what's more, no question of her death was even raised. She might have been thrown in the sea for aught we or others knew, but of course that is foolish to say. My own judgment is that she died a natural death, and faded away, as you might fancy, just from despair, for they said if any one ever looked its picture it was herself, poor dead lady."

"And what was her name?" asked Erica, thoughtfully. "I don't think I ever heard it mentioned."

"Likely enough, Miss Erica, for the truth is the lady disappeared as it were like a broken bough to the family tree, all withered and gone, but her name was, as I believe, Geraldine, and a pretty name it was too to my thinking. It used to be a great deal in the family to judge from the old times, but it's never been used since, though there were three or four girls born to your grandfather and to Sir Hilary beside yourself, Miss Erica."

The girl had listened to this tale with her eyes as well as her ears; she had drunk in each word and mysterious detail of the romance, and when Bridget stopped a deep-drawn sigh proved how great had been the tension of her faculties at the melancholy picturing of her aunt's suffering; a thousand floating fancies had glided over her mind in the brief space.

She had imagined each probable and unlikely cause for the banishment of the unhappy lady from her home.

Of course as Erica's age nothing save disallowed love could be supposed to be the reason for this strange punishment of the luckless Geraldine.

But then in what manner?

Had she married secretly and clandestinely?

Was her husband living?

Had she a child to add to her happiness or grief?

These questions rushed like a surging torrent into the young girl's brain while Bridget went on with her tale, and when it was ended they hovered on her lips but as she well knew in vain.

She had never detected any trace of falsehood in Bridget's recital, and she had absolutely declared it impossible to give any more details of the case.

It were but to lower, and perhaps injure, her chance of hearing more at some future time, if she insisted on learning what it was out of the power or the duty of the housekeeper to tell at the present moment.

"Tis very hard—very, Bridget," she said. "And do you suppose the picture is destroyed, or is it merely put in some other part of the house? I should so like to see it."

"I can't tell you, on my soul, I cannot," replied the woman, solemnly. "And perhaps, if I could, I should not dare. But that is not it; I do not know, Miss Erica. If it is, it is in some place where I have not been, and I do not think I am likely not to have found it if it had been in Rosanne. But I must go now, my dear young mistress, for it's getting late, and I must see to the dinner, for that spalpeen of a cook will never do as I tell him unless I am near to his heels and his dunderhead to see it is all right."

And Bridget hastened away to the lower regions, while Erica remained in deep and thoughtful contemplation of the blank space on the vacant panel that spoke so much more eloquently than words of the banishment and the sorrow of its former beautiful occupant.

CHAPTER XIX.

"WELL, Beatrix, are you free from engagements to-night, or am I to wait your good pleasure in the filling up of your card?" said Lord Ashworth, as they sat, after dinner, before preparing for the grand castle ball.

The lady blushed vermillion up to her ear tips.

"I scarcely think you could complain if I had made engagements irrespective of you, Gaston," she said, with some embarrassment. "You forget that you had not even deigned to announce your return to-day, and it would scarcely have comported with my dignity to have excused myself, and behaved like a love-lorn maiden, because you were not at my side to assume your proper place."

"Ah, certainly it was all in keeping, I am not at all complaining, Beatrix," he said, coolly. "But it may be as inconsistent with my dignity to be thrown over to-night by you as for you to have lost a few dances on my account, and it might save all trouble if I do not go to the castle to-night at all."

"Gaston!" she exclaimed, indignantly.

"Beatrix," he added, in a calm tone, "what may be your idea on the subject? I should like to know."

"Oh, just as you like," she said, angrily. "Of course it is a woman's duty to submit and all that, and never to assert her rights. I daresay I shall learn the lesson before long."

"I very much doubt that," said Gaston, with a grave smile. "But that you may have no cause for such pique or complaint, Beatrix, I will say thus much—I could not inform you of my plans unless I could control life and death in their various contentions with each other. The person of whom I wrote to you was hovering on the very confines of the grave, till last night gave him a little respite from suffering, and I did not lose any time in coming to you for a few brief days, when I must return for the inevitable hour at which I shall be the sole mourner probably at the death-bed of the grave."

Beatrix looked half doubtfully at her cousin.

"Is it any one who has a real claim on you, Gaston, or is it a romantic caprice like the one at Lough Corrib?" she asked, with an attempt at playful raillery that sat but ill on her passionate, imperious nature.

"Yes, certainly, the claim of humanity, and it may be of something more; but that remains to be proved, Beatrix," he said, coolly. "However, it is no time to talk on such sad subjects when you are longing to prepare for the brilliant gaiety of to-night. I will obey your wishes for this once at any rate, Beatrix," he went on. "If you wish me to go, and can and will place me in my rightful position, I will attend you. You will not fear that I shall be fanciful or exacting in my claims."

Lady Beatrix hesitated in her reply, and to the keen penetration of her companion every moment of the pause did but betray fresh phases in the mood and feelings of his betrothed bride.

But her answer came at last, in decisive and even eager accents.

"Come with me, Gaston. I can surely claim to be queen with such butterflies as hover round every fresh face at the castle court. You shall not have cause to complain, unless you take a very jealous and exacting mood. I shall be far, far happier if you are at my side."

It was fortunate, perhaps, for the continuance of the Lady Beatrix's betrothal that she spoke these words in a tenderer and softer tone than was her wont.

Gaston was in no mood to brook haughty exaction or slight from the proud girl at his side, and their future hang on the turn of a die at that moment.

"So be it, Beatrix; I believe in your assurance. Whatever may be your failings I sincerely think that the slightest deception formed part of your character. We will not lose time then; we will go and prepare. I do not care for any affectation of singularity in late hours of arrival or of departure in any sort of regal receptions."

And the young earl held the door open for his cousin to pass through as he spoke.

Beatrix made no objection—at least, not in words—but certainly her toilette du bal was by no means a hurried one.

And Gaston had been awaiting her some half-hour or more ere she appeared in the drawing-room where Lady Kathleen was lingering to bid them good night and inspect her niece's appearance on the memorable occasion.

"Lady Antrim will be waiting for us, I fear, Beatrix," said the earl, as he sprang up to meet his fair betrothed who, at last the door opened.

But he might well be pardoned if any words of reproach remained on his lips unspoken.

Beatrix was dawning in her beauty at that moment, her natural charms heightened to the very utmost by the toilette she had chosen.

It consisted of an exquisite amber silk toned down by draperies of priceless black lace, and by ornaments of diamonds and jet; while in her rich black hair was simply placed one too-rose and green leaves, secured by a flashing pin of diamonds of unusual size and beauty. The whole toilette was rich and elegant, and yet in such perfect taste, while the very simplicity of her coiffure did but display to the ut-

most her massive wealth of coal black hair, which was so certainly descended from her Spanish ancestry, that even Gaston with all his fastidiousness could not even wish one feature of her dress to be altered or improved.

"Well, you are certainly a very pretty creature, niece mine," said the Lady Kathleen, with a feeble smile. "Yes, I think it is as well that your cousin will be at hand to guard you from any butterfly hovering round you," she added. "There will not be much more attractive a belle in the ball room to-night—or I am much deceived in Dublin society and Dublin beauty."

"Yes, Lady Antrim will not be ashamed of her charge, that is very certain," observed Lord Ashwood, in his calm, practical style. "Adieu, Lady Kathleen, sleep well, and we will try not to disturb you on our return."

He kissed the wrinkled hand of the old lady as he spoke with respectful tenderness, that was scarcely to be expected from his age and temperament.

Beatrice saw, and, strange to say, was actually jealous of her elderly and invalid aunt.

"Gaston, you are more complimentary to the Lady Kathleen than to me," she said, reproachfully. "There was more softness in your manner when you bade her good night than usually falls to my lot."

"That is easily to be explained, Beatrice, if it is so," he replied, gently. "Your aunt is in need of every tenderness and consideration that can be bestowed, and deserving of it too—so far as I ever saw or heard of her. You are independent of all such homage. It is enough for you to have beauty and rank and wealth to secure every attention you may desire."

Lady Beatrice cast her eyes down in deeper thought than perhaps befit her brilliant dress and the gala it betokened.

"Gaston, sometimes I think you would care for me more if I was poorer and more helpless," she said, suddenly.

"Not care for you more, Beatrice, but I might be less fastidious and exacting in such a case. Now your very gifts and endowments force a man with any self-respect to pride and firmness in his courtship of you," was the deliberately spoken reply. "You would not think me worthy of you were it otherwise, at least, not if you are as noble minded as I believe, I hope."

At the moment and even while the soft warm flush that the last words brought to her cheeks, was still glowing beautifully in the soft skin, the carriage stopped at Lady Antrim's, and in a brief space more they arrived at the castle gates, where the usual process of waiting and reception was gone through as the little party entered the ball room.

The band was starting up as they passed along the chalked and polished floors, and they had scarcely reached the upper part, where the quadrilles were forming, ere Lady Beatrice was greeted by her admirer of the morning—the Lord Oranmore.

"I feared you would not arrive in time. I have been watching and waiting and actually bribed the leader to be as long as possible in his preliminaries," he exclaimed, coolly preparing to draw the young girl's hand in his arm.

Beatrice somewhat shrank back, but scarcely in the decided rebuke that Lord Ashworth would have a right to expect, and he at once interfered.

"Pardon me, Lord Oranmore, Lady Beatrice Clare is engaged to me and I cannot relinquish the claim."

The young earl laughed scornfully. "I shall certainly decline, even if you were engaged more personally than for a quadrille to Lady Beatrice," he returned. "Certainly in the present instance I shall not hesitate."

It was a tempting occasion, of which a more devoted or less honourable lover might have taken opportunity.

The public announcement of his betrothal to the most beautiful peeress in all Dublin, probably in all Ireland, should have created a decidedly sensational triumph which would have placed him at the very summit gay assembled throng.

But there were more contending feelings than Gaston himself suspected to prevent the use of such a weapon, and he haughtily evaded the question.

"It is for the lady to decide in such cases, Lord Oranmore. I, myself, dispute the validity of any engagement formed out of the ball room, and I believe that it is very generally acknowledged that such is not to be recognized. But my cousin surely must be the referee, where her pleasure is concerned. Beatrice, what do you say in the matter?" he went on, in a quiet, careless voice, that prevented any idea of serious animosity to the curious spectators of the scene.

Beatrice Clare was proud and decided enough in her ideas and her manner on most occasions, but in this instance her presence of mind appeared to fail. In truth, she was distracted between the expediency and the prestige of the contending aspirants for her hand even for that brief period.

There was even a lurking distrust in her ambitious mind that made her future as Gaston's bride, doubtful and hazy to her views. Was she to risk all for him, and then, perhaps for some trifling failure in his ideas of duty to be left planted, and stranded on the desolate sands of life?

Has she to reject all, to be confined within the narrowest limits of maiden life in order to gratify her cousin's exacting vanity, and at last receive from him a coldly philanthropic or a disappointing compe.

Never, the heiress beauty would certainly risk all, rather than encounter so mortifying a chance, and the resolution was taken in a hundredth part of the time it has occupied to describe the struggle that preceded it.

"I hope my cousin Gaston will pardon my having so far committed myself before being aware of his coming," she said, with a bewitching smile. "It is too late to retract when once I have given my word, unless Lord Oranmore had forbore to claim it," she went on, with a timid appeal to her new admirer that gave her a new claim in his enthusiastic eyes.

"You can scarcely expect me to be tasteless or so self-denying," replied the young man, triumphantly.

"I accept your decision with all the satisfactions you can suppose from your knowledge of my character and feelings, Beatrice," added Gaston, in her ear, as she moved off with her companion, and then he retired to think rather than to indulge the mortification or the anger he might have been excused for cherishing.

He sat down in a somewhat secluded corner that communicated with the conservatory that in its turn led to a room appropriated to cards and conversation, and began to think calmly and seriously on his line and conduct of the occasion. Not for the long vista that stretched out in which his fate and that of Beatrice Clare would be described, but in the more imminent crisis that presented itself.

And the result of his meditation would have been by no means flattering to the object who had rendered such deliberation necessary by her vacillation and vanity.

The natural bent of his temper was to cover its fire with snow and ice.

And he resolved that in this case there should be no exception to this law of his being. An inscrutable barrier should be placed between him and the unjust assailants of his peace and self-respect.

Accordingly, this victory won, he once more emerged from his seclusion and prepared to mingle with the gay throng to whom sadness or sorrow seemed unknown.

He was in time to encounter the fair daughter of the Viscount, just relinquishing her partner of the last dance, with the smiling courtesy and indifference that sat well on her young but matron brow.

She had been now for some few years a wife and mother, although her bright features and light graceful figure had not lost the girlish charms which had distinguished them in her maiden days.

Lord Ashworth met her friendly greeting with answering cordiality.

"This is an almost unlooked-for pleasure, Lady Maud," he said, accepting her outstretched hand with a warm though respectful pressure. "I hope Vernon is well, and your small miniatures in the nursery."

"Thanks, oh, yes—or I should not be here, I am such a terrible fidget, do you know, Lord Ashworth, and conceited enough to think nothing can go on well unless I am in the play," she replied, gaily. "But where have you come from? I have not seen you for an interminable time, it seems to me," she added, kindly.

"Will you honour me with your hand for the next dance, or, still better, will you sit out with me, and then we can exchange historical reminiscences," replied the young nobleman, earnestly, and Lady Maud, fearless in her innocence and her high position, willingly complied with the last part of his request.

They sat down accordingly in a quiet bay window that commanded the view of the ball room and also of the lovely conservatory where a perfect wealth of bloom and fragrance greeted the senses.

"Which of us is to begin?" said Lady Maud, gaily, after a few minutes' pause. "Oh, I think I had better give my own commonplace experiences first, since they only relate to emigration from Dublin to London, the Castle to Vernon Court in company with my husband and by those small fry who are a pleasant but by no means trifling anxiety to me sometimes."

"And why, Lady Maud? I thought nurses and governesses who take all possible trouble off a mother's hands were as plentiful as mushrooms."

"And about as transient in their existence," in-

terrupted Lady Maud, gaily. "I do not know whether they spring up in a night, but assuredly they seem to collapse on nearer contact. I really do not think I am very exacting or very ill tempered, yet I have tried three general governesses within the last year, and not one could I have trusted in my absence from the children. But I am now in negotiation with a young dame who I hope will prove an actual treasure, if all that I hear of her is true, and then I shall turn into a butterfly once more."

"And have you seen this rare axis, Lady Maud?" asked Lord Ashworth, perhaps throwing more interest into his tone and manner than he actually could be supposed to feel, as Lady Beatrice and her companion passed near them at that moment.

"I? Oh, no. I have trusted to some factotum of my husband in the shape of a banker or lawyer, or some such useful necessity of life," replied the young matron. "He is, I believe, much interested in the young lady in question, and I am fain to accept his account of her and her qualifications. But where have you been, and what have you been doing? What has kept you so long from civilized society?"

"A truant disposition, Lady Maud," returned the young nobleman, gaily. "I have been wandering abroad and at home. I have been playing all the homely characters you can imagine. Pulling drowning folks out of the water, amusing dying retainers of the family, escorting unprotected dames, and quarrelling with every one more attractive than myself while filling these distinguished offices."

"There's a list that ought to be sent to the Hamane Society," laughed Lady Maud; "but when is all to be merged in the one great event, Lord Ashworth?" she added, more gravely.

"I will not affect to misunderstand you, Lady Maud; you mean my marriage," he answered, coolly. "My marriage with my cousin, I daresay you really imply, and I can only say I have no more idea than yourself whether or when it will come off."

"Whether! Surely you cannot be in earnest," she said, glancing at Lady Beatrice. "Why, you would be thought absolutely benighted to throw up such a chance. She is so splendidly beautiful, and so wealthy, I understand."

"Perfectly true, Lady Maud, and yet I am quite in earnest. The matter is extremely doubtful, and I would trust in you before any friend I have, were I to have any real confidence to make. At present all is too uncertain for even conversation about it."

Lady Maud saw that some wounded feeling was mingling with the jesting tone, and she turned the subject; but the breaking up of the dance, and the sudden influx of the waltzers, stopped the tete-a-tete, and ere long Lord Ashworth moved away from the spot.

The supper was announced, but as Gaston had not been dancing, and had no duties to fulfil to his partner on the occasion, he did not go down with the first rush of hungry guests, but remained quietly examining some of the pictures and statues with which the apartment were lavishly decorated.

One portrait attracted him from its dark and glowing beauty, that bore some resemblance to that of Lady Beatrice, though the whole expression was of a somewhat softer stamp, and the features less proud, and yet might be thought by some more weak and indecisive than those of the heiress.

Gaston could scarcely have said whether such a modification of the girl's character would have satisfied better his fastidious taste; but certain it was that he became riveted by the resemblance to his cousin, and lingered decidedly longer than he himself was aware opposite to its frame. But he was roused at last by a hand being placed on his shoulder, and a voice rather contemptuously addressing him by name.

"Come away, my dear fellow, to more inviting regions," said Lord Oranmore, coldly. "Lady Beatrice cannot really eat her supper in your unwarrantable absence. Come along, she has sent me for you."

Gaston calmly moved away from the familiar touch.

"I really am not so completely an appendage of Lady Beatrice that I should be sent for like a smelling-bottle or a fan," he answered, coldly. "I am coming presently when inclination leads me," he went on. "A supper table is a wonderful magnet to all comers, no doubt."

"Nay, there is metal more attractive to my fancy, at any rate," observed Lord Oranmore, rather sarcastically, "but I suppose you have a grudge because I was the favoured one this evening. Perhaps it's no great wonder; one does not like to be out with a splendid girl like your cousin," he went on, laughing scornfully.

Gaston's blood was hot before, now it rose to boiling pitch.

"If this is badinage, Lord Oranmore, it is simply impudence; if serious it is intolerable presumption. In either case I request you not to repeat it," he exclaimed, more fiercely than he himself or his companion had expected; in truth few ever dreamed that the imperturbable Lord Ashworth could be capable of such an outburst of passion.

The reply was a low, derisive laugh.

"Really, my good Othello, you are very amusing," he said, sarcastically. "If you are Lady Beatrix's suitor, of course all is fair in love and in war, only I object to such a very overbearing mode of carrying on the contest. If you profess to be engaged to her, I call you a soft-hearted craven to bear such cavalier treatment, that is all."

For a moment Lord Ashworth's hand was raised to descend with no light violence on the shoulder of his taunting assailant.

But he forcibly withheld the blow, and swallowed the burst of rage that fevered his very tongue to pronounce.

"Lord Oranmore, such words recoil on their speaker; they prove that he is the very person he describes, and I throw them back as they deserve. I have no fear that there will be any portion resting where they are not due."

And he turned his back to the foaming and bawled rival as he spoke.

"Let us understand each other," said Oranmore, in a choking voice. "Dare you imply that I am

"The very person you describe so aptly," sneered Gaston, utterly beyond all patience; "take the words home, they will stick more closely than pitch, depend on it."

"Of course you know what result must follow this?" replied the young man, in fury that scarcely allowed him words.

"I neither know nor do I care—be so good as to rid me of your presence without delay," said Gaston, impatiently. "I may perhaps be driven to more unpleasant modes of freeing myself from annoyance if you try me too far."

"Then you will hear from me, that is all," said Lord Oranmore, in a tone of concentrated rage.

There is a way of settling these matters between gentlemen that saves all farther trouble. I presume that you are not willing to endure that indignity without resentment? If so, I shall certainly make it public in this county and the other also."

And the young man brandished his arm with a significant gesture that betokened his meaning as he disappeared.

The whole scene had been so rapid that Lord Ashworth could scarcely realize its full meaning. But as he paused to think a cold and bitter resentment pervaded his whole spirit at the cause of his position, and his danger. Gaston was brave, but he was no fool-hardy, thoughtless idiot to rush on death without one tangible cause, and still less did he desire to take the life and blood of another and have his conscience burdened for life with its wretched memory.

Yet, if he refused, what would be the penalty. Shame and disgrace in the eyes of the world, where such actions are even attributed to the worst and most degrading causes.

He would move under a stigma that would certainly expose him to fresh insults, and his whole life perhaps be affected by the result of one such doubtful effort to fulfil what he believed to be right and just and manly. And all this was the work of her to whom he was ostensibly betrothed and united by close ties of blood and kindred—from the folly and pride of Beatrix Clare.

(To be continued.)

MEN'S COLLARS AN INDEX OF CHARACTER.

A MAN'S collar is as expressive of his character as a woman's bonnet is of hers. Of course, I know that certain collars are in the fashion, and certain collars out of it; but there appears to be a peculiar providence in these articles of attire, and any man is always able to suit himself.

Fashionable young men generally get into the same peculiarly neat little singular affair, which looks as though it had been varnished, and shows the diamond collar-button so nicely, while below it shimmers the silken tie over a miraculous shirt-front. A man with this collar will never do anything out of the way. He is prettily conventional in everything. He knows the people whom it is "the thing" to know. He says what it is right to say. He is not apt to be original, but he never shocks one.

There is another man, however, who does not ask what fashion-books say about collars, and who always wears his as big as he chooses. It becomes, in some instances, large enough to be alluded to in derision by the youths in the streets as a "cape." It is not particularly clean or stiff, and it is surely not becoming, but it distinguishes him as a "person of

views." No one who has not peculiar views wears this collar. Sometimes he is a spiritualist, sometimes a Communist, sometimes a Mormon. On some subject or other it is probable he has a propensity to lecture; but always over his collar falls long, unkempt hair, and there is always an expression in his face which seems to say, "If you don't believe I'm a great man, look at my collar."

There is another sort of great man, self-dubbed, who wears the turnover "Byron," very large. He is to be seen in elegant attitudes on the street corners, and at hotel doors. Sometimes he writes poetry for the papers; sometimes he is a very minor actor; sometimes he sings. Whatever he does he never does it well; for no person of distinction ever attitudinises.

M. D. K.

PROCASTINATION.

Or all the thieves that steal from men,
Or e'er disgrace a nation,
There's none, I wot, so strange as this
We call procrastination.

There's none so bad, there's none so sly,
There's none were so unheeding
As he I here personify,
And none so well succeeding.

He doesn't straightways take our purse
Nor any earthly lucre,
But where is rife the games of life
Has stealthy ways to euvre.

He steals our time, and well we know
This is the greater treasure
That any man, in his brief span,
Can find within his measure.

Though we would fain do noble work,
Wherever we'd be doing
We're sure to find the thief inclined,
Our thoughts and deeds pursuing.

And then, perforce, of cunning craft,
He so restrains our acting
That ere we've done our race is run,
Our years have no retracting.

Thus, it is known, we often lose
Much of earth's choicest blessing,
Which time's great thief, to our great grief,
Deprives us from possessing.

Then how, the query is, can we
Attain to life's conclusion,
And ever be from troubles free,
Which mark this thief's intrusion.

Be this our answer, terse and plain:
The future never borrow,
Nor put away work of to-day
To do it on the morrow.

For, as I've said, of all the thieves
Besetting every station,
There's none, I woen, so very mean
As is procrastination.

E. W. L.

DAILY LIFE.

Is our daily life what it ought to be—what it might be? Do we not allow petty vexations and trivial things to sour our temper and darken our brow—the impulses of nature to get the better of us? That impatient word just now; you were fretted, but did it make you feel any more pleasant? Those light and trifling thoughts, they have gone to give their account against you. That witticism at another's expense; you meant no harm, but was it, after all, quite right, and doing just as you would be done by?

And then the words that are unspoken, the opportunities neglected which might be productive of so much good! How much evil we do when we might do good! How much reproach we bring upon ourselves by our inconsistencies! How little we practise what we preach! How little we do unto others what we would that they should do unto us! How selfish we are, and ready to listen to the promptings of self-interest! How we permit little jealousies and animosities to rankle in our hearts, and pride, vain and impotent, to fill it! How little of charity do we feel for an erring brother or sister, as if we never erred ourselves! How imperfect and incongruous are our lives!

And yet we might make of life a most beautiful thing; but it must be our daily life that will do it.

Little drops of water,
Little grains of sand,
Make the mighty ocean,
And the pleasant land.

So loving words and deeds of kindness, tender sympathies and gentle ministrations, constantly and daily expressed, will make our lives majestic.

Did you never see those that have appeared the very embodiment of goodness, in whose presence there was an attraction irresistible, magical? They have seemed to you like an oasis in a dreary desert

and, like green and fertile spots in a barren waste. You have sighed to be like them, as good and beautiful. You can be, if you will only make the endeavour; you can adorn your soul with such grace; you can make your life so attractive that you will carry with you, wherever you go, the charm most potent.

To many daily life seems dull and prosaic, but there are passages in it of surpassing loveliness. Did you reply kindly just now when spoken harshly to? Did you receive that bitter upbraiding meekly and silently? It was a beautiful thing. Did you speak words of sympathy and hopeful cheer to that poor and despondent soul? Did you lighten the burden of that weary brother or sister? Heaven will remember and reward you. Assistance will come down to you from above, when you are "weary and heavy laden."

Would that we treasured these opportunities of doing good, and prized them more highly, for they are jewels with which we may adorn our souls with richest grace—goblets from which we may quaff the delicious waters of happiness.

Let us strive to live that our life's little acts shall have no remorseful shadows hanging over them. Life will then have a new meaning for us; it will become a daily reality to us, for only as we grow nobler and better do we really live; only as the heart advances in that which is good do the spirit's chariot wheels move on towards the celestial city.

A PUZZLING QUESTION.

JACK GREEN was as concealed a specimen of humanity as you could find in a long search.

He was two-and-twenty that it was about the proper age for him to marry. He was chock-full of conceit, and belied he could get any girl for the asking.

He imagined all the ladies, young and old, were wonderfully fond of him, and he was bothered in his mind which to choose.

"It's a confounded bother this marrying, and I'd let my mother arrange it for me, but I expect that wouldn't do, and I must do some courting myself," he soliloquized. "There's a lot of the creatures coaxing and looking sweet at me, and it's really puzzling which one to marry. One thing I do know and that is, if the one I make Mrs. Green doesn't suit me I'll get a divorce."

The first step was taken when Jack escorted pretty Rose Tremaine to a picnic. Before two hours passed by he saw she was equally gracious to his comrades. He didn't like it a bit, but what could he do? He concluded to let her severely alone.

Little Lee, the next favoured one, snubbed him outright. She left him tete-a-tete with her mother, while she slipped off to play croquet with a neighbour.

He bowed himself out and went off in a huff, and for two whole weeks never went near the creatures, as he termed the young ladies; then he thought them sufficiently punished, and he thought they'd use him better in future.

He went the rounds of all his young lady acquaintances, and, strange to say, they all were blind to his perfections and their own best interests, and appeared to be unwilling to become Mrs. G.

He unbosomed his woes to a friend, who was a bit of a wag, and was told to persevere.

"They are dying to get you, and you must come out point-blank and pop the question. Let them know you're in earnest and you'll be married before you know it."

Gladly he followed his friend's advice, and offered his heart, hand and fortune to at least a dozen; but, strange to tell, they declined the honour.

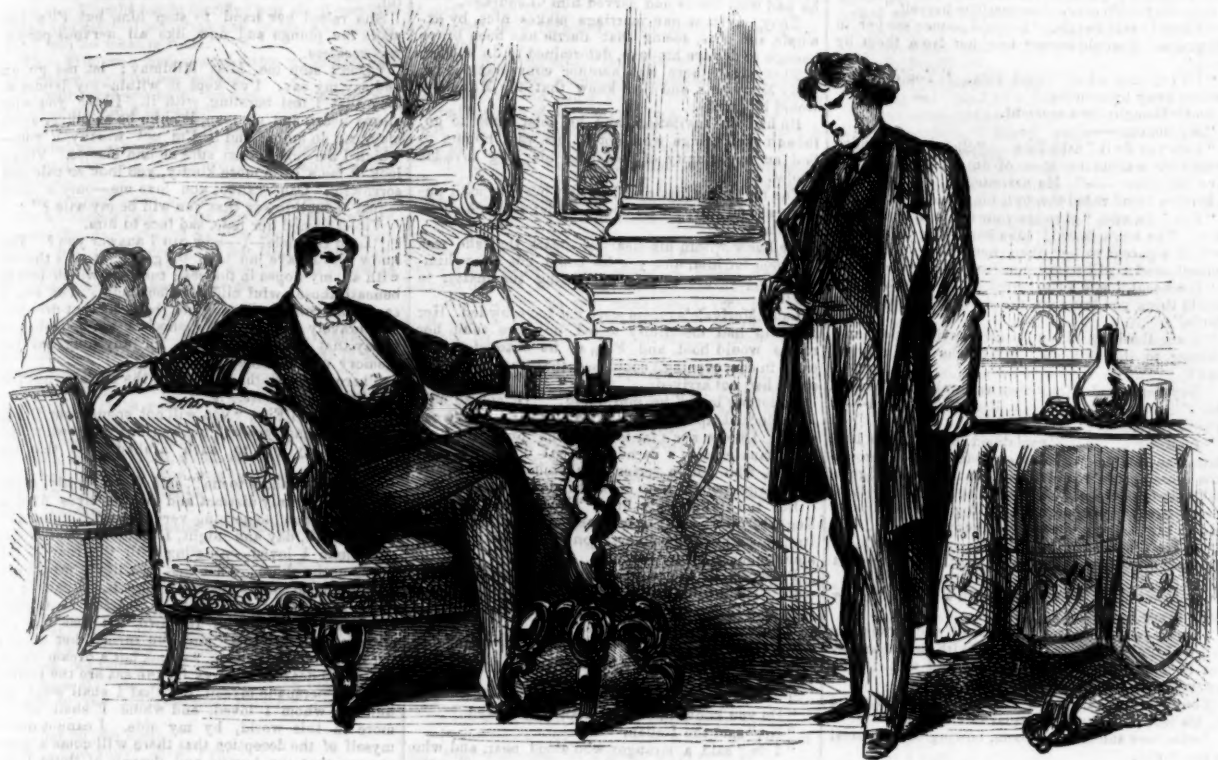
He was informed by one that she was too young, and wouldn't marry for a dozen years.

Another thought herself too old for him, which was very strange, he thought, while one port miss said he wasn't "well furnished in the upper story," Jack tried to convince her of her mistake—said that "house was well furnished from top to bottom," but she laughed in his face.

He now began to get a glimmer of the truth, and was dumfounded therewith. How any young lady of sense could be so unwise as to refuse him, the only son and heir of the rich Squire Green, who lived in the big house on the hill, was a mystery to him.

Jack now is puzzled to know who will choose him. He is no more troubled with the previous question.

If any young and fascinating lady has hitherto been left out in the cold in the matrimonial market, let her take heart of grace, and pay the Green establishment a visit, where she will be quite sure of an opportunity to leave the state of single blessedness, and shine in the matrimonial ranks as the daughter-in-law of Squire Green.



[THE BLIGHTED BEING.]

THE SPIDER AND THE FLY.

BY
CHARLES GARVICE,
AUTHOR OF

"Only Country Love," "The Gipsy Peer," "Fickle Fortune," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XLIV.

What you cannot as you would achieve
You must perforce accomplish as you may.
Shakespeare.

For the first few moments Bertie's sensations on reading Lord Lackland's letter were anything but distinct, then gradually, as he realized the blow which the earl's duplicity had dealt him, indignation predominated.

He had been basely deceived and betrayed, and his betrayal rendered all the more bitter by the foretaste which he had been allowed to have of his happiness.

What should he do?

How he longed that Leicester were alive—cool, grave, judicial Leicester—to advise and guide him!

What was he to do?

If he obeyed the impulse of the moment he would seek Lady Ethel, beseech her to declare her choice before the world and brave the matter out.

But how far would that be consistent with honour and her duty to her parents?

He knew how good, how noble, how patient Ethel was, and he felt within his own mind that he should never be able to persuade her, even if he were to try, to go against her father's will.

In this frame of mind Bertie wandered listlessly down to his club.

In the smoking-room, to which he repaired, he found Fitz extended at full length, sipping a brandy and soda.

He determined on the spur of the moment to confide in him.

"Hullo, Bert," said Fitz. "What have you done with my nag?"

"Taken him to the stable," said Bert. "I suppose you half feared that I had bolted?"

"No," said Fitz. "What is in the wind? No mischief, I hope."

"Fitz," said Bertie, seating himself beside the good-natured Fitz, "I'm in great trouble."

"No!" exclaimed Fitz. "I thought that nothing ever troubled you, Bert!"

"Something does now," said Bertie, gravely. "It's about Lady Boisdale—Ethel."

Fitz shook his head gravely.

"I was half afraid there was something on there, Bert, between you and Eth. I've noticed it for some time, and I thought perhaps you'd speak. I wish you had, because I could have told you that there was no chance for you."

Bertie coloured.

"Do you mean that you yourself, Fitz, have an objection to me as the suitor for Lady Boisdale's hand?"

"No," said Fitz, heartily. "Nothing would give me greater pleasure; but it can't be, Bert. Look here, one secret is as good as another. There's nobody listening, is there? I'll tell you something," and he sighed deeply. "Eth and I are as much slaves as any nigger going. We can't marry where we like and we can't do as we like. People think because I'm the eldest son and she's the daughter of the Earl of Lackland that we can do just as we like. Bert, it's a mistake. We're tied hand and foot. We must marry money. Why?" And he looked sadly at Bertie, who stared in astonishment.

"Why? Because we haven't a single penny ourselves. We Lacklands are as poor as church mice. There isn't an inch of land, there isn't a brick or stone that isn't mortgaged, and we young ones, Eth and I, must bring it all right again by marrying money. She'll have to marry some retired tea-dealer, and I—well, I know where I'd marry, and marry money, too; but I can't. The angel—for she is an angel, Bert—is too great, too grand, too good for me. You know, Bert, that there is no man under the sun I'd like to call brother more than I would you, but it can't be. Take a cigar and some liquor and give it up as a bad job, for it can't be. Eth would never marry you without the earl's consent, and he never will give it."

"But," said Bertie, "he has given it."

"What?" said Fitz, with surprised astonishment.

"Given it and taken it away again. Read that," said Bertie, and he handed the earl's letter to Fitz.

Fitz read it and his eyes opened their widest.

"But—but," he said, "do you mean to say that the earl gave his consent to your marrying Ethel—don't be offended, old fellow, I know you are worthy of her if any one is—without striking a bargain?"

"N—no," said Bertie as the earl's words concerning the private fortune of Ethel recurred to his mind. "No, he informed me, very unnecessarily, that Ethel's fortune would be retained or forfeited."

"What!" exclaimed Fitz, springing up with angry

astonishment. "Do you mean to tell me that her money is gone? that she is robbed with the rest of us?"

"I tell you nothing but what I heard," said Bertie, calmly.

"It is gone," said Fitz, white with passion, "of course it is gone! Idiot that I was to think he would spare that when he has taken all else! He has spent—squandered the poor girl's fortune, and then sells her, bargains her away to the first comer. It is shameful. It is unendurable; and, by Heaven, I will not endure it!"

"The bargain is off," said Bertie, bitterly. "You forget that the earl has thought better of it. He has recalled his consent."

"Yes, because he has received a higher bid! I know him!" said Fitz, sternly. "He would sell her to the highest offer as if she were a horse or a piece of furniture. When did this occur?"

"This morning," said Bertie, and then he placed Fitz in possession of such of the facts as he himself was cognizant of.

"I see it all," said Fitz, pulling at his yellow beard in a frenzy. "That Howard Murpoint has been at the bottom of it. But have you noticed how thick the earl and he have been lately? I begin to hate that fellow. Do you remember the old time down there at Peuraddie, when he was a regular bore?"

"Shall I ever forget it?" said Bertie, softly.

"Oh, no! poor Leicester!" said Fitz. "Well, we said there was more in the captain, as he called himself then, than appeared at first sight; and now look at him! He's the heart and soul and the whole machinery of the Mildmayes, his name is good on 'Change for any amount, and now—now he has taken an interest in us. Bert, there's mischief brewing, mark me if there ain't. Who is this Mr. Smythe you saw with him this morning?"

"A millionaire, one of his city friends, a nob and an idiot," said Bertie, calmly.

"Then that's the fellow Ethel will be sold to," said Fitz, with calm despair.

"No," said Bertie, rising, white and passionate.

"I'd shoot him first."

"Shoot him and be hung," said Fitz groaning.

"You can't prevent it. Howard Murpoint is cleverer than us all, and if he has set his heart upon Ethel's being sacrificed to this Smythe fellow, why, sacrificed she'll be."

"I will help it," said Bertie. "I do not believe that Ethel will ever consent."

"She will," said Fitz. "I'll tell you why. They'll represent that if she marries the fellow she'll

save the family; and Ethel has such straight ideas of duty that she'll consent to sacrifice herself."

"Never!" said Bertie. "I would sooner see her in her grave. I would sooner tear her from them by force."

"I'll tell you what," said Fitz. "You'd better get her away by cunning."

Bertie thought for a moment.

"My honour—" he said.

"Bids you do it," said Fitz. "She will sacrifice herself for a mistaken idea of duty. Nothing will save her unless—" He hesitated.

Bertie's blood raced through his veins.

"Fitz," he said, "give me your consent, and I will do it. You know how I love her. You have been more of a parent to her than her father. Say you consent, and I will snatch her from their clutches."

"I consent," said Fitz, "with all my heart, and I should think you less than the man you are if you didn't."

"I am thinking of her," said Bertie, rising and walking to the window. "Will she ever forgive me?"

"Try her," said Fitz, rising and walking towards him. "Try her. She loves you, Bert, I know, and—What's the matter?"

"Look here, quick!" exclaimed Bertie, who had started suddenly. "Look there—among the crowd now crossing the road! Isn't that the very figure and walk of poor Les? Heavens above! How like. It sent every nerve of me thrilling," and he sank into a chair, staring out of the window still.

"I didn't see him," said Fitz. "Poor fellow! you were great friends. Was it anything like him in the face?"

"No—too old," said Bertie, with a sigh. "Poor Les! Poor Les!"

Then he fell to walking the room, and drank his soda and brandy like one parched with thirst, and at last he and Fitz got into a corner and talked in a low voice for some time.

They were talking when Howard Murpoint came in, his face lit up with his usual serene smile.

Bertie rose and left the room, bowing the slightest in the world.

Fitz shook hands languidly, and dropped into his seat again.

But the captain did not care for the coldness on either side; he felt sure of his game and could afford to be forgiving.

Meanwhile Ethel had received her orders.

She had gone to her mother in a gleam of happiness, and told her all, thanking her and Heaven that had been so kind as to bless her love.

The countess regarded her with stony stare and sent for the earl.

He smiled coldly and addressed the astonished and dismayed girl after this fashion:

"My dear," he said, "there is some mistake. I gave Mr. Fairfax no decided answer, or if I did I see good reason now to recall it. Your mother, my dear, will never consent to the match."

"Never," echoed the countess, in obedience to a signal from the earl.

"But," remonstrated Ethel, beautiful and pale, "Bertie—Mr. Fairfax assured me that you had consented, my lord."

"A mistake," said the earl, "and to rectify it I have written to Mr. Fairfax. I can say no more on the matter, further than that I can never countenance the match, and that I desire you will hold no communication with Mr. Fairfax either by word or letter."

"But, my lord," pleaded Ethel, pale and tearful.

"But—nothing," exclaimed the countess, as the earl, with his cold frown, left the room. "You know it cannot be. Is it possible that you should marry this mere nobody, who has neither kith nor kin to recommend him? Forget him!"

"That is sooner said than done, mamma," said Ethel. "I will obey you and my lord, but I cannot forget Mr. Fairfax for I love him." And so saying she left the room.

Five minutes afterwards the earl acquainted the countess with Mr. Saythe's infatuation for Ethel, and his enormous wealth.

"She will marry him," said the countess, decisively. "Ethel has always been a good, obedient girl, and she will do as she is told. She will marry him."

"And Fitz must secure Miss Mildmay," said the earl.

"Of course," said the countess. "We have Howard Murpoint on our side."

So, very well satisfied with themselves, the earl and countess disposed, mentally, of their children, forgetful that Fate holds the reins, and that the coach of life must roll whither its horses convey it.

That night Ethel was taken to Combe Lodge, and Bertie, who called at Grosvenor Square, was told that the family had left town.

Meanwhile Fitz remained, and the conversation he had with Bertie had nerved him to courage.

They say that one marriage makes nine, by example, and Fitz, seeing that Bertie had been brave enough to declare his love, determined to do so also.

That night there was another conversation at Lady Morvale's, and Fitz knew that the Mildmays would be guests.

He had an invitation, and he determined to go, though such things were not in his way, hoping to find an opportunity of declaring his long love for Violet.

The night was hot, and Fitz felt burning with uneasiness and fear, for he feared Violet as much as he loved her.

He knew within his heart of heart that she was too good for him, and yet he could not deny himself the pleasure or pain of putting the matter to the test.

Lady Morvale's rooms were not too crowded. Her ladyship had mercifully asked no more than her rooms would hold, and Fitz, as he entered rather early in the evening, could see that the Mildmays party had not arrived.

"Just my luck," he murmured. "Of course now I've plucked up courage she won't come. Serve me right. I know she's far too generous for me."

He sauntered to a corner and sat down beside an Italian, who had a series of sketches to show and tried to get poor Fitz to speak to him.

But the Italian only knew "Yes" and "No" in English, and Fitz only knew "Maccaroni" in Italian, so thus the conversation did not afford much amusement to either party.

Presently, as the rooms grew fuller, a tall gentleman with white hair and wearing spectacles approached the two and, bowing to the Italian, asked permission to see the sketches.

He spoke in Spanish, a language as strange to Fitz as Italian, and after a few minutes, Fitz rose and left the Italian and Spaniard together.

The Spaniard looked up wistfully.

"Do you know that gentleman?" he asked.

"No," said the Italian.

"I do," said a stranger who stood near, and who was none other than the club news-monger, Tommy Gossep. "That is Lord Roisdale, eldest son of Lord Lockland. He's engaged—or going to be—to Miss Violet Mildmay."

The Spaniard bowed, smiled and departed.

At that moment Violet entered on the arm of Howard Murpoint.

The Spaniard saw Lord Fitz approach and take her from Mr. Murpoint and frowned.

"Is it true?" he murmured to himself. "Is she going to marry him? Has she forgotten me?"

Then he sighed and sauntered off with a melancholy smile to a retired alcove.

He was not in the humour for the gay and talkative crowd and wanted a little quiet.

He sank down into a cool corner of the velvet lounge and fixed his dark eyes upon the floor.

"Why did I come back?" he mused. "They think me dead; they have forgotten me—they have ceased to mourn for me, and others have stepped into my place. I had better leave the world which knows me no more, and try for a new life in some new land. I see the best and fairest—she whom I loved—has no thought, no faith that lasts more than twelve months. I see that the rogue flourishes. I am disgusted with the world and I will leave it. That poor fellow, the escaped convict, has more gratitude and affection and faithfulness than all the rest put together. We will go together—he and I, outcasts—and see the world no more."

He half rose in his bitterness as if to carry out his threat at once and leave the world, but at that moment two persons entered the alcove.

They were Fitz and Violet.

Fitz led Violet to a seat, then, murmuring something about the draught, let down a heavy curtain before the couch on which sat the melancholy Spaniard.

Thus the miser was cut off from the others, a listener and made a spy much against his will.

Before he could move to make known his presence Fitz spoke, and his tone, more than his words, transfixed the listener to the spot.

"Miss Mildmay," said Fitz, plunging into his task with a nervous precipitance, "I am so glad I can see you alone for a few minutes."

"Yes?" said Violet, looking up with dreamy, calmly serene gaze, which had nothing of embarrassment and therefore nothing of love in it.

"Yes," said Fitz; "I have been longing for this opportunity for some time. Miss Mildmay, I am a bad hand at speaking what I mean, but you know I mean all I say. You know that, though I'm a poor, good-for-nothing wretch who oughtn't to be allowed to breathe the same air with one so good and clever as you, but you know that I love you—"

Violet's face grew pale and very sad and mournful.

She raised her hand to stop him, but Fitz had made the plunge and now, like all nervous people, was reckless.

"Don't stop me, Miss Mildmay; let me go on and say my say. I've kept it within my bosom so long that I feel bursting with it. I love you with all my heart, and no man, let him be as clever as he may, can do more; and if I'm not worthy of you—which I am not—I am sure no one else is. Violet, look at me a little more kindly, you look so pale and sorrowful. Can't you love me—only a little—just enough to say that you will be my wife?"

Violet turned her pale, sad face to him.

"Lord Roisdale—I—how can I answer you? You know that I have no love to give. It was a throw with all my hopes in the sea; that sea which breaks beneath those awful cliffs at Penriddle. You see I can speak calmly. I can look back at that dreadful past bravely and without shame! I am not ashamed to say that I have no heart for anything but the memory of a vanished past."

There was a slight air behind the curtain, but the speaker did not notice it.

"But," said Fitz, "you will not spend your life in either mourning, you will not sacrifice your own happiness and my life to such a shadow as that memory—"

"It is no shadow to me!" said Violet, softly, sadly, her voice dreamily distinct and low, her eyes fixed as if gazing upon something very far off. "Oh, no! I see it all, day and night, I hear his last words—the man I loved—musing with the roar of the sea upon the shore. I see that past life of mine ever, day and night, and I am wedded to it. I can be no one's bride while that past, so fearful, so intense, rises and claims me for its own. It does that: it absorbs me. All this," and she turned her dreamy eyes towards the alcove, "seems but a dream to me, and those dear dead days by the sea are the reality. I cannot persuade myself but that I shall wake and find him whom I loved, and whom I shall see no more in this world, by my side. I cannot divest myself of the deception that there will come a great change, that the horror and despair of these latter years will be swept away, as is a mist before the sun, and that my life, with its wild, delicious hopes, will live again; that I shall awake from the dream and pass into the reality."

"You see," she said, with a start, and evidently arousing from her reverie, and remembering, "that it is useless to ask me for love. You would not have me without Lord Roisdale?"

"I would," said Fitz, his eyes filled with tears. "Violet, dear Violet, you need some one to watch over and guard you, you need some one who could and would devote his life to recalling the smile and the sunlight to you. I am willing, I am anxious. Confide in me, Violet; trust yourself to me. My love asks for nothing at your hands but yourself and the right to guard you. Oh, Violet, I have loved you so long—I—I would have died for you."

"Do not speak of death!" said Violet, "with a shudder and a hurried gesture of entreaty. 'I cannot bear that! I will have no one speak of dying for me! I believe—the dread elixir to me—that be—Lucifer—came to harm through me. No, no; no one shall die for me!'"

And she half rose, wild and pale.

"Be calm, dear Violet," implored Fitz. "See how wild, how frightened you have become. Confess now that you need some strong right arm to protect you, to save you from the terrible state into which you have fallen! Violet, I do not ask you to love me, I only ask that you will promise to try. Have pity on me! You have a little, you say, but remember how I have been hoping for so long, and say that you will promise to try and love me."

Violet closed her eyes and seemed lost in thought, then she opened them and smiled sadly.

"I have been thinking of all you say, dear Lord Roisdale," she said. "I am grateful, very, very grateful. I know how good, how true you are, and I would implore you to give that noble love to some one more deserving of it but that I feel it would be an insult to do so. I know I am weak—perhaps that I am wicked. Oh, that I knew what was right!" she broke off wildly and with clasped hands.

"Say yes," pleaded Fitz. "You cannot trust yourself to any one who can understand you or love you better."

"Give me time, time," pleaded Violet. "I must have time to think."

"A week?" said Fitz.

"No, no; a month—a month!" said Violet, in a low, constrained voice.

"Well," sighed Fitz, "a month if you will have it for so long. Say a month. It's a very long time, but—"

—and he sighed again. "Well, a month! Try to say yes, dear Violet."

"I will," breathed Violet. "I will try to do what is right. I ought not to sacrifice you if—if you love me as you say. I am weak and feeble and selfish, but I will do what is right."

Then Fitz rose and looked down upon her, pale and struggling with her weakness.

"I will leave you now," he said. "I am sure you are tired and—excited."

And he raised her hand to his lips.

But before he could kiss the curtain was pushed aside and the tall, white-haired Spaniard came before them.

Fitz dropped Violet's hand with a nervous start.

Violet herself rose to her feet and stared wildly, but the Spaniard paused only for one moment, then, fixing his dark eyes upon her face, bowed low, murmured gravely, "Pardon, senora," and vanished as noiselessly as he had appeared.

CHAPTER XLV.

VIOLET, seated on a foot-stool at her aunt's feet, told her all that night, and Mrs. Mildmay, as in duty bound, informed Howard Murpoint.

In some way, before night fell, the world had got at it, and the clubs were rumouring that Lord Fitz Boisdale was engaged to Miss Mildmay.

In a few days a rumour still more exciting and relishing was produced, to the effect that Lord Lackland had accepted the wealthy millionaire, Mr. Wilhelm Smythe, as squire for the hand of Lady Ethel Boisdale.

Bertie at his club heard the rumour, and dashed off in search of Fitz.

He found him seated moodily and dreamily in an easy-chair at the smoking-room of his favourite haunt.

"Ha, Fitz!" he exclaimed, "is it true?"

"What?" said Fitz, flushing. "What have you heard? Don't say it's too good to be true; don't cast me down, old fellow; you don't know how my heart is set upon it!" he exclaimed, thinking that Bertie alluded to the understanding between Violet and him.

"What do you mean?"

"What do you?" asked Fitz.

"Why, this—this—false report—that Ethel is to be married to that odious fellow, that miserable young money-bag?"

"I can't say I've heard," said Fitz, frowning earnestly. "If I thought that there was anything in it, I'd go for my big whip and thrash him!"

At that moment a waiter put a letter into his hand.

He opened it, and his face grew red with indignation.

"Read it," he said, and thrust it into Bertie's hand.

It was an intimation from the earl that Mr. Wilhelm Smythe had proposed and been accepted. Bertie, in his passion, could not speak a word.

Fitz tore the letter into a hundred pieces, and threw the fragments into the grate.

"Cheer up! But," he said, "he shall no more have her than those pieces shall come together again. We'll show them that right is stronger than might in this case."

Bertie clasped his hand.

"You will come down with me?" he said.

"I will, and will put our plot into execution; no time must be lost."

"I'll go to-night," said Fitz. "You stay here and wait till I telegraph. I'll put it carefully so that nothing happens. I'll telegraph that 'wheat has gone up.' Then you'll know that you're to come down."

The two talked together for a few moments excitedly and eagerly, then Fitz went off, calling to a servant to saddle a horse at once.

He started that night for Coombe Lodge, and appeared there the following morning as fresh and as light-hearted as usual, but with the determination to stand by his friend and save his sister at all costs.

Ethel was not up when he arrived, and she entered the breakfast-room without any expectation of seeing him.

"Fitz!" she exclaimed, the warm blood rushing to her face as she sprang to him.

He held her in his arms, but would not show any emotion.

"Hullo, Eth!" he said, "why you've gone pale again! where's that summer dress. I've heard the news—don't tell me any more—I'll congratulate Mr. Smythe when I see him."

Her face went paler, and her eyes filled with tears.

She crossed her hands upon her breast.

"I have done right, Fitz, have I not?" she said.

"The earl has told me all—how poor we are, and how necessary it is that you and I should sacrifice ourselves for the House. You will not sacrifice your self, though, Fitz, will you? There need be no oc-

casions. You will give your hand where you give your heart," Dear Violet."

Honest Fitz turned his face aside to conceal his emotion.

"No, Eth," he said, "that will be all right."

Then to avert suspicion he rattled away to the countess, as she came in, in his old style, and actually spoke of Mr. Smythe in a friendly way.

It cost him something to be deceitful, but he did it, and succeeded in blinding them all.

The next day he was particular in his attentions to the ladies, and allowed himself to be inveigled into a game of croquet—a game he detested.

In the afternoon he went into the servants' hall and nodded to Ethel's maid.

She came out into the garden, and a conversation took place between her and Fitz, which was concluded by Fitz dropping some gold into her hand.

That evening he was more merry than ever, and not even a letter from Mr. Smythe, saying that he should be down the day following, depressed his spirits.

That night, when the countess and Ethel were seated in the drawing-room, the former gloating over the approaching wedding, the latter inwardly shrinking from and shuddering at it, Fitz rode over to Tenby and telegraphed the few significant words:

"Wheat has gone up."

The following morning broke fluently.

"What time is Mr. Smythe to arrive?" asked Fitz, cheerfully.

Ethel flushed and bent her eyes to her plate.

"He will be here before dinner," said the countess.

"See that the horses are sent for him," said the earl from behind his paper.

"All right, I'll see to that," said Fitz. "Meanwhile, just to spend time, suppose you and I have a gallop, Eth?"

Ethel thanked him with her eyes.

"Then go and get your habit on at once," said Fitz.

On the staircase Mary, the maid, met her crying.

"If you please, my lady, my brother's broken his leg, and—and—can I go home at once?"

"Certainly," said Ethel, softly. "I am sorry, Mary. You must not wait for anything. Fitz," she called down, "can you let Mary have the brougham?"

"Yes," said Fitz. "What does she want it for?"

Then when the sobbing handmaid told him all, he said, like the kind fellow he was:

"Yes, and tell William to put the pair of grays in for you. They'll take you to the station fast enough to catch the train."

Mary went off gratefully, and Fitz and Ethel soon afterwards mounted and started for their ride.

"I wouldn't heat him too much," said Fitz, who seemed to be saving his horse, to Ethel.

"We are not going far, are we?" asked Ethel.

"Oh, not if you like, though I think we had better take the opportunity. We may not have many more rides together, Eth."

Her eyes filled with tears.

"Let us have a long ride, Fitz, then," she said.

They rode on, Fitz saving his horse and showing no disposition to turn.

At last Ethel said:

"Don't you think we had better turn, Fitz? We shall not be in time."

"Let us go as far as that signpost," said Fitz.

"Then—"

"We shall not be in time for—for Mr. Smythe," said Ethel, forcing herself to say the hateful word.

"Oh, yes, we shall, I think," said Fitz, with a twinkle in his eyes. "Hullo, here's my horse gone lame!"

"Where?" said Ethel, but Fitz had jumped off.

"What shall we do?" said he, "he's dreadfully lame; I've noticed it for some miles, but said nothing. I can't ride him back, and you can't go alone."

"What shall we do? Where is a post town?" said Ethel.

"I don't know," said Fitz. "Here's a carriage!" and he pulled out his watch as he spoke, muttering, "Punctual, by Jove!"

Then he called to the coachman:

"Can you tell us the nearest post town? We want horses or something."

"I'm going that way, sir," said the man. "My young fellow will take your horses on, and you can get inside."

Fitz, without giving Ethel time to consent, hurried her in and jumped in himself.

"Drive on, my man," he said. "We are in a hurry."

"Fitz," said Ethel, who had been looking out of the window, "do you know anything of this man?"

He is taking the horses in another direction."

"No," said Fitz, but was spared any other false-

hoods by the approach of another carriage which pulled up, as did theirs.

The door of the other carriage opened, and there ran across the road a slim young lady who rushed towards Ethel.

"Mary!" exclaimed Ethel.

"Jump in," cried Fitz, hurrying the maid in.

At the same moment some one mounted the box of their carriage, a heavy weight was thrown upon the top and away they started.

"What does it all mean, Fitz?" asked Ethel, looking half frightened. "Where are we going?"

"We are going to Penwhiffen—to that place where there is the pretty church," said Fitz.

"Church!" said Ethel, "and Mary!—and—Oh, Fitz! who is that on the box going with us?"

"That is the luggage," said Fitz, with a twinkle in his eyes. "The luggage and Mr. Bertie Fairfax."

The cat's out of the bag, Ethel, my pretty one! We're running away with you! Bertie's got the special licence in his pocket, and Mr. Smythe will have his journey to Coombe Lodge for nothing."

Then as Ethel burst into a flood of tears he caught her to him and gave her a hearty pat on the back.

(To be continued.)

BEATRICE.

"No!" The word came from the heiress of Hale Hall to her lover, Ronald Redster. She was very pretty, with blonde hair that even a princess might have envied, and eyes that shone like crystals; but now they were downcast as she uttered this one word, which seemed so cruel to Ronald Redster.

"But I love you with all my heart, Beatrice, and I—"

He did not finish the sentence, for Beatrice stopped him by a wave of her hand.

"I dare not and I will not marry you; it was my mother's last wish that I should marry Sir Lyon Seclar." And here Beatrice stopped and trembled, as if from fear.

"Then I have no hope, Beatrice?" he asked, with a slight tremor in his voice.

"No hope at all, Ronald; though you know I would marry you but for my poor mother's words."

"Good-bye, Beatrice," he said.

She sadly held out her hand.

"Good-bye, Ronald."

Beatrice glided softly from the arbour towards the house where she had spent so many happy hours, Ronald watched her until she was out of sight, and with a heavy heart, walked slowly home—to his mother.

Mrs. Redster was seated in her sitting-room, embroidering a pair of slippers.

"Why, how late you are, Ronald!" she said, as her son entered, looking around at him as he stood with one arm resting on the mantelpiece.

"Yes, mother."

His tone was so sad that Mrs. Redster involuntarily asked:

"What troubles you, my boy?"

"Only the old story, mother. You know I love Beatrice Hale. Well, this evening I asked her to be my wife and she absolutely refused me, though she acknowledged that if it were not for a promise she made her mother to wed Sir Lyon Seclar she would consent to be mine."

"My poor son! Is there no hope of her relenting?"

"None."

"Do not despair—hope on. But, hark! did you not hear a cry?"

"Yes; it sounded as if some one was calling for aid," replied Ronald.

He went hastily to the window and looked out.

"It's the Hall on fire!" he wildly cried, and then rushed out of the house and across the wide, open country to the Hall.

Arrived at the scene of disaster, Ronald's first thought was of Beatrice. He looked up to her window, and saw her dart across the room and throw up her hands. Hardly conscious of what he did, he rushed through the Hall, up its wide stairs to the door of her apartment. It was locked, and the fire was raging around him. He called her name twice, but heard no response. With desperate energy he threw himself against the door and burst it open. The smoke and fire within met him with a great gush, but, heedless of this, he rushed in, falling over the almost lifeless body of Beatrice. Catching some blankets from the bed, he wrapped her in them, for her clothing was beginning to burn, rushed wildly out of the room, into the hall, and down the stairs to the crowd assembled in the garden, where he fell fainting to the ground.

After the fire Beatrice was carried to the home of Mrs. Redster, where every means was used to make

her comfortable. Ronald, who soon recovered from his slight scorching, next morning returned to the Hall. Matters were not so bad as he thought; the wing was completely gone, but the rest of the Hall was not much injured.

Sir Lyon Seclar had not been seen since the fire broke out.

Ronald was gazing at the ruins, puzzling his brain to try and think what was the cause of the fire, when he was startled by voices not a very great distance from him.

"One thing—bark!" said a voice—that of a woman.

"Go on, you little simpleton! No one can hear us," was said, in a gruff voice.

Just then Ronald heard some one coming up the gravelled walk, and he recognized Beatrice. She looked very pretty, with roses on her cheeks, brought there by the brisk walk she had just taken. She was about to speak, when Ronald checked her with a wave of his hand. She understood the sign and listened.

"He has done you no harm," the unknown woman said.

"But I will have my revenge on Redster! What right had he to save Beatrice? We must say he did it, and Mr. Hale will not allow his daughter to associate with an incendiary."

"As sure as you try to bring in that young Ronald I will let out the secret!" answered the woman, with vehemence.

"Now, Jane, look here. I will give you twenty pounds if you will help me in this business," said the man.

"Money down?"

"Yes."

"Ah! you know I can't refuse that offer," replied the woman, "for I have not eaten a mouthful of bread since yesterday."

"Will you keep the secret?" asked the man.

"Yes," replied the woman, indifferently, as if yes were the same as no.

"All right! Come, then."

The voices ceased—evidently the speakers were moving away.

After a few minutes of silence Beatrice looked up at Ronald, saying:

"What do you think of that?"

"I think these people are plotting something against me, Beatrice, do you not think there is a mystery about that fire?"

"Yes, Ronald, I do. I feel sure the Hall was fired purposely."

"I fancy," said Ronald, thoughtfully, "that those people intended to throw suspicion on me."

"Oh, Ronald! How can they do that?"

"I don't know—wicked people can do anything. But who is that coming up the road?"

"It's little John Fairfax," said Beatrice, "and he beckons to us. What is the matter, Johnny?"

"Oh, Mr. Ronald!" cried the child. "Your mother was taken ill after you left the house, and wants you and Miss Beatrice!"

"We must hasten then," said Ronald, with a startled look upon his face; and they wended their way towards home.

After the two plotters had left the vicinity of Ronald they moved on rapidly but silently till they came to a ruin which had the appearance of a fallen castle. They went into the dilapidated pile, and descended a flight of stairs apparently leading to a cellar.

"Now, Jane," said the man, speaking for the first time since they left the garden, "let us put on these masks, so he'd not recognize us if he should contrive to escape; but I doubt if he'll get the chance." And he chuckled maliciously.

"All right," said the woman. "But, John, I want the money you promised me."

"Well, can't you wait till we see him?" And the speaker pointed with his finger towards the foot of the stairs.

"Let us hurry and get out of here, for it seems so damp that I shall catch my death of cold," said the woman, shivering.

"Well, come."

They travelled quite a distance, and turning to their right, unfastened the bolts of a door that had the appearance of being that of a dungeon. They both stepped in, closely masked.

"Well, my friend, how do you like your place?" said the man, addressing a young and handsome-looking man whose feet were chained together. He was sitting beside a table on which was placed a cup of water and a half-loaf of bread.

The prisoner made no answer.

"What is the matter with you?" asked the man. The young man was still silent.

"Well," said the other, "I'll tell you this much: I am going to marry Beatrice Hale. Our plot has worked so successfully that every one will think

Redster set the Hall on fire. But we kindled it pretty nicely, didn't we, Jane?"

"Beatrice will not marry you," said the prisoner. "Well, I am going to make her marry me," said the man.

"You dare not do it!" exclaimed the young man, his eyes flashing.

"You dare me, do you? Well, I shall ask her tonight."

"I'll have my revenge, even if I die in the attempt!" retorted the prisoner.

"You will? Try it, and I'll string you from one of these beams!" pointing to the top of the dungeon.

The prisoner did not answer, but turned his back on the hopeful pair.

"Come," said Jane, uneasily, pulling her companion's sleeve. "It is cold here."

"All right. Good-bye, my friend. Take care to keep the rats from eating your bread," said the man, in a taunting manner.

"Oh, John!" said Jane, as they were about to leave the dungeon. "We did not lock this door when we came in!"

"That's so; but never mind. I think no one heard what I had—"

He did not finish the sentence, for Jane touched him on the shoulder and exclaimed, in a frightened manner, her face white as death:

"I saw her! Oh! oh! oh!"

And she began rocking back and forth, and at last sank to the ground, covering her face with a thin shawl she wore about her shoulders.

"Who was it?" the man asked, looking uneasily in all directions.

"I saw her, and she went off in that direction!" exclaimed Jane, impatiently.

"Well, who is she?" he asked, impatiently.

"Mrs. Hale!" gasped Jane.

"Bah! she's dead and buried long ago. But where's that key?"

"Here it is," and the trembling Jane handed it to her companion.

He locked the door of the dungeon, and tried the bolts to see that they were all right, and then they ascended the stairs and passed through the ruins into the warm, sultry air, which seemed so different from the atmosphere within those lonely ruins.

Meanwhile Ronald and Beatrice were seated by the side of Mrs. Redster, who lay on a sofa in her room.

"Ronald," she said, "I am shocked, not ill. Do you remember Jane Brown, my former maid? She came to me early this morning, in great agitation, and confessed that Sir Lyon Seclar is at present confined in the old ruins at the bend, and that the man who imprisoned him, one John Clancy, is determined to win Beatrice for his wife, pretending he is some rich gentleman. This same man fired Hale Hall, intending to carry off Beatrice in the confusion; but you, Ronald, thwarted his schemes, and, for revenge, he intends to accuse you of the deed. Now hasten, my son, to the old ruins, and rescue the unfortunate young man."

Ronald wanted no second bidding, and leaving his mother in charge of Beatrice, started on his errand of mercy, accompanied by several of his neighbours—among them Mr. Hale.

We left Sir Lyon in his prison, where he sat and pondered over his chances of escape. He was suddenly startled by hearing footsteps in the ruined castle; then a man's voice said:

"Mrs. Redster told me he was in these ruins!"

Hope filled the prisoner's heart. Raising his voice, he called for help. His cries were heard, for in a little while he heard many feet descending the stairs, and approaching the door of the dungeon in which he was imprisoned.

Five minutes later, Sir Lyon Seclar, pale and weak from the effects of his confinement, stood in the open air, and told his story, which exactly tallied with that of Mrs. Redster.

The officers of justice were immediately set upon John Clancy's track, and before nightfall he and his accomplice, Jane, were safe in prison, to await the punishment of their crime.

Mr. Hall and Sir Lyon went with Ronald to his home, where they received a cordial welcome. Mrs. Redster had quite recovered from her temporary indisposition, and did her best to promote the comfort of her guests. But both Beatrice and Ronald were silent and preoccupied. They knew that Lyon looked upon Beatrice as his intended wife, and were sad in anticipation of the future.

At a late hour they stepped out in the garden together.

"Beatrice," said Ronald, "I shall not stay here to see you become that man's wife. I am going to leave the country."

"Oh, Ronald! What will become of your mother?" asked the weeping girl.

"She shall come with me—together we will leave this accursed place."

"Are you angry with me?" said Beatrice, timidly. "Yes," answered Ronald. "It is true that it was your mother's wish that you should marry Sir Lyon Seclar, because he is a rich man. But your father told me to-day that I had the best right to you, because—"

"Because you saved my life," interrupted the girl. "Oh Ronald! how can I thank you for that brave act?"

"By becoming my wife," replied Ronald. "Will you, Beatrice?"

"Oh Ronald—I dare not! The thought of disobeying my mother is terrible!"

"And yet you love me?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Then you shall marry him, Miss Beatrice," said Lyon Seclar, suddenly stepping in front of the astonished pair. "Pardon me for listening; I suspected you loved each other, and determined to find out for myself. Beatrice, you need not disobey your mother, for I refuse to marry you. Mr. Redster, you are a brave man, and worthy of this young lady. Take her, then, and be happy."

A month later, and Beatrice became the happy wife of Ronald.

The old Hall was rebuilt, and soon afterwards it found a new mistress. The former name of the present Mrs. Hale was Mrs. Redster.

Sir Lyon Seclar did not wear the willow long, but soon found for himself a bride. The three families ever maintained toward each other pleasant social relations, and finally forgot the dark time of trouble which all had passed through.

C. B. L.

LUNCHEON.

THE two most common subjects of complaint with wives and mothers of limited income in this and other large cities are, first, that they are debarred from society by the expense of the ordinary methods of hospitality; and, secondly, that the habits of city life separate them from the companionship of their children.

The wife of a man in moderate circumstances tells you that she cannot afford to give balls, kettledrums, or even dinners, to her friends; that her boys and girls scurry off to school after a hurried breakfast, and dine at noon alone; for being a woman of sense, she will not allow them to eat the heaviest meal of the day at six or seven o'clock in the afternoon, when their father comes home to dinner. The family dinner at midday, and the evening tea of inland towns, at which parents and children gather about the table and learn to know one another through the interests and feelings of every day are almost unknown in the same grade of social city life.

Now we suggest that luncheon is a meal of undeveloped opportunities to the housekeeper and mother. We do not by any means refer to the elaborate state lunches given by leaders of fashion during the last two or three years, where the floral decorations alone cost a liberal annual income, but there is no reason why any housekeeper should not, with a little personal trouble, convert her children's dinner into a delicately served, savoury meal, to which she could invite informally two or three of her lady friends. It is emphatically a woman's meal, and husbands need not hint cynically that the chief dish will be gossip. There is no better talk than that of three or four cultured, clever women alone together; none which would be more civilising and effective on children. How is a child to acquire good breeding if it is not brought socially into contact with well bred people? Children in cities are crammed with all kinds of knowledge, but they are left to the companionship of servants and of one another; who can blame them if they too often betray the ideas and manners of the kitchen and the ball ground?

The dishes on the lunch tables should be light—but prettily served. A meal of cold meats, pickles, creams, fruit, thick chocolate, with dry toast, etc., can be more easily made attractive, as every experienced housekeeper knows, than the heavy courses of a dinner. It is advisable, too, for this noonday meal to colour the table warmly. The majority of economical housewives buy the plain white china for every-day use, but it has, to us, a chilly and meagre air in conjunction with the ordinary snowy napery. There are equally cheap sets of both English and French china of delicate, rich colours, which, under skilful handling, convert an ordinary meal into a picture. The most beautiful and (where there is any garden room) the cheapest table decoration is of course, flowers. A little care and trouble will provide these without expense. Morning glory vines, cobs, wild ivy, and lark will grow each in a foot square of back yard, and bestow themselves skyward

thereafter, and with a few boxes of coals in an attic window, will crown your board with a splendour like jewels until the snow comes. This daily lunch requires, perhaps, time and care; but our reader will find her reward at the end of the year, if she have established the custom in her house of a wholesome, unhurried, dainty meal, where she can meet her children and friends cheerfully and with little cost

THE TEMPTER FOILED.

EVERYBODY in the neighbourhood was in bed and asleep but this one little girl—woman, who in her desolate room sat toiling the hours away. Everybody in the vicinity was doubtless comfortable that black night but Alice. She was busy, too busy, she thought, to mind the bitter cold; but now and then as she stops to alter her position, she feels the keenest chills shoot through her body, and she sighs to think how helpless she is to protect herself and others.

In the bed near her, sleeping the fearless sleep of sweet childhood, is the little orphan brother whose life has known no other mother. And just beyond, in another bed, in which slept two other little ones who look to her for all that existence is to give them. Right gladly would she lay down her life for them if that would avail, but she knows that it is her hands that are to provide.

Poor Alice, she had made the acquaintance of a woman's bitterest foe, dire want, and she turns to her work with a pain at her heart fierce and keen.

The hours pass, and it is two o'clock in the morning. Now she soon must sleep, for whatever the children have to eat she must prepare it, and some rest she must have before the day breaks. So now is my opportunity.

Is she not beautiful? Look at her soft brown hair, waving over the pretty brow and half concealing the delicate ear. See her fine lips, beautifully outlined eye-brows, and resplendent eyes. She is the very picture of refinement, and she sits there toiling. I must tell her something.

Alie, the world hates you for all these gifts you have, because you are poor—one orphan struggling for many. There is no room for you, or such as you, in virtue's world. Money is the lever, and you have none. No, you have no money. The last pennies will go for bread to-morrow, and then you will be hungry till you earn more.

How will you bear it to hear the precious children you love suffer for bread? Ha! you start. You had not thought it would come to this. But they will go hungry, for how can you feed so many while you are so honest? Tears! what have your eyes to do with tears? Who taught you to weep? It is petted woman's weapon in all emergencies, but it is a failure with you, for there are none to dry your eyes, none to see you weep.

You are thinking of the mother under the snow to-night, and you are weeping that the world is so pitiless to those who have no friends. Those are the kind they frown upon, child. Were your mother here, with her purse lined with gold, I should not be here—you would not sit here and freeze. Nay, your courtiers would be on every side; they would hang about you as moths about a candle. You would be adored for your youth and beauty, and honeyed words would bring the glad light to those self-same eyes that now overflow with tears.

Will you give no thought to your tired body, no rest to your weary head? I want to whisper of an easier life than this you lead. You need not struggle so earnestly—you cannot rise. Down, down you must go with me until everlasting ownership will be mine.

Does she heed me?

She seems to catch the meaning of the thoughts I have uttered for her, but she only sighs. She does not divine my presence, and she only deems it her morbid imaginings. Even then she weeps to think she could entertain such monstrous thoughts.

I laugh derisively. She shrinks instinctively. It is useless to shrink, my beauty. Fairer than you have shivered in the blast, but all the same they are now mine.

"Mother in Heaven," she whispers. Ah, that is pretty, but she cannot save you, brown eyes. The dead return not again.

Hark, she is praying, I like it not.

Something she is saying about the "fatherless and motherless Heaven—not forsake"—What means all the orphan asylums, Alie, if Heaven has not forsaken them? The head droops. She is sobbing, wailing.

Weep on, poor child. Many another, stronger than you, has wept for far less woes, and been lost all the same. What have you left now, Alie?

"I have my soul!" she cries. Heaven will keep it stainless.

Indeed? A mighty friend it is to you this bleak night. No fire, no money, no nothing, but a trio

of helpless mouths to feed, and no wherewithal to feed them.

"I'll have my strength left," she expostulates.

Ha! ha! your strength! Mighty as a reed it is. Why, child, your very helplessness brought me here. I was seeking just such as you, and you I have found. Will you do as I bid you?

"Heaven shield me from temptation, from sin; give me faith and courage. My mother's Heaven, protect these helpless ones, and lead me, their guide, where the Shepherd can save us from destruction. Save us! oh, save us!"

Strange, strange, how she prays. I did not see she had so much in her. No willing prey, I find. What faith she feels. Now she has slipped down from her chair, and is kneeling.

"In temptation's hour," she cries, "I call upon Thee. Darkness is about me, upon me, and my soul wanders towards sin. Anchor it now, my Father. Be to me in this hour, mother, brother, father, friend. Leave me not until I am past the danger."

How can I reach her while she prays so? I will wait until the paroxysm is over, and then, when she finds how vain are her prayers, she will embrace me as her friend. Hark! some spirit is coming. I hear the rustling movement even from the high portals. Over the battlements of Heaven glides another and another form, and still she kneels, praying. She fears me, and she hides her face, while she calls upon the "Father." The air grows purer; I cannot penetrate it now. She is lifted farther and farther from me. There beside her I see the shining raiment of a disembodied spirit. It is her mother. About her is a great light, and it comforts her. She is hushed.

"Fear not," says the second form. "Lo, I am with you always."

What means it all? I thought to clutch my rightful prey, a homeless orphan; a struggling, suffering girl. I thought to find it easy work to make her mine, and behold she's snatched from me as the brand from the burning. My opportunity is lost. Her narrow chamber is become a temple, into which even the immortals are permitted to come. About her is reflected the dazzling light of heaven. Her faith is greater than my strength. Her prayers—think of it—opened the very throne gates of the other life, and from its realms are come her rescuers. I thought to take one of misfortune's victims, but I mistake my own—she is one of the redeemed. Her counsellors are angels, and her Father upon whom she calls so trustingly is the Saviour of men—the very spirit of love, and truth and purity, before whom I cannot stand.

L. C. H.

THE SLAVE OF A HORSE.

WE are well aware that the individual who says a word derogatory to "that most noble animal," the horse, runs a risk of forfeiting the good opinion of the public.

It has been the fashion, from time immemorial, to laud the horse to the skies, as the type of brute fidelity and nobility.

He is a favourite character in all the novels, and he performs wonderful feats of sagacity and prowess, and delivers heroes from deadly jeopardy, and rescues heroines from haunted castles, and prison dungeons; and carries pardons to innocent men who are standing on the scaffold with the rope around their necks, and he generally drops dead at the foot of the gallows, when the pardon is presented to the attending officer.

Oh, we have all read acres of printed eulogiums of the horse, and we believe the most of them, and we all admire a good horse, and long to be the owner of one.

But it is, nevertheless, a fact that the horse is the most timid and silly in many things, of all created animals. A turkey gobbler in full strut, a white stone by the wayside, an old paper bag, a school girl in a white apron; a broken bit of harness touching his sensitive heels, the report of a rifle, the whistle of a locomotive—any of these trifles will oftentimes frighten this noble and faithful animal to such an extent that he will run away and put in peril, often destroy, the life of his kind and affectionate master, without a scruple of his equine conscience.

He will kick his best friend, frequently on no more provocation than a fly on his leg, or a touch of clothing against him; and he will lay back his ears, and bite the groom who cares for him, when out of temper or patience. Will the ox do any of these things? Will the dog? Whoever heard tell of the Arabian camel's killing his master? Even that much-abused animal, the cat, will not wound the hand which feeds her, though her tail be stepped on, and her kittens are flung into the creek with bricks attached.

What says the Scripture on the subject?

"A horse is a vain thing for safety, nor shall he save any by his great strength."

Again, though in some respects a powerful animal, he is a helpless one and a delicate one. If he sweats, he takes cold. If he strains a limb, he has spavin. If he overexerts, he is foundered. If his feet are kept dry, he has thrush. If he gets sand into his hoof, he has quitters, or something of that nature, and if he eats clover (which he likes better than anything else), he will slaver; and as he approaches middle life he is liable to a catalogue of diseases, the names of which would "floor" most juvenile scholars.

The cat and the dog groom themselves, and are always tidy and clean; the horse must have his dressing-maid of the male persuasion, in order to be presentable. It is as much trouble to take care of a horse properly as it is to bring up a colicky baby.

But in spite of all these "outs" the horse is, and always will be, a prime favourite. Treacherous and unstable horses there will be, and lives will be lost, and valuable bones mashed by them, till the end of time; but the horse which is faithful and true is a prince of the blood! No matter whether he can go in a grand carriage, or whether he drags his master's plough—if he do his duty faithfully—all honour to him. And in his old age may the gods grant him rest in green pastures and beside still waters, where gad-flies come not, and gnats do not molest!

But a man who owns a horse of the nervous flighty kind, and has not a sufficiency of hard work to put him to, is the slave of a horse.

Mr. Binks, one of our neighbours, is a case in point.

Two years ago he got rich in the tallow business, and bought a horse, and at that time his liberty and peace of mind came to an end. Mr. Binks's horse was fast—everybody craves a fast horse—and, like all other horses, he was "warranted sound and kind," and perfectly safe for ladies and children. Mrs. Binks was delighted with the idea of how she would drive by Mrs. Jinks, who was her rival, and who wore more ruffles on her dress than Mrs. Binks sported, and whose husband owned a piebald nag with a wall eye, and a pheton something after the pattern of the deacon's one-hoss-shay.

Mr. Binks found that his constant attention was required to keep his horse's spirits within proper bounds. His warehouses had to be neglected, and his business at loose ends generally, because of "that horse." Let any man inquire for Binks and he was invariably informed that he was occupied with "that horse."

If Mrs. Binks wanted to clean house, and needed Binks to move the stoves and nail down carpets. Binks couldn't possibly accommodate her. He had "got to exercise that horse, my dear."

He had always been a regular church goer, and his pastor had often pointed him out to the sinful young men in his congregation as a model, a man to be copied after; but now all that was changed. Binks couldn't go to church because if "that horse" stood in the stable over Sunday without being driven, would be unconquerably "kinky" Munday morning.

And then the amount of dosing and doctoring "that horse" received! Mr. Binks became a regular veterinary surgeon. He studied innumerable books on horses, and learned all the horsey phrases, and smelled of the stable continually. "That horse" must have his hoots rubbed in camphor and opium to ward off spavin, and he must be walked about the yard for an hour or two every morning to prevent swelled legs or apoplexy, and in consequence Mr. Binks could not attend to family prayers, and the religious standing of the Binkses sank below zero.

Mr. Binks also suffered in the conjugal relations. He was so much engaged with "that horse" that he couldn't stop to kiss his wife properly when he went away from the house of a morning, and he never brought home bouillons to the children, because his pockets were fully occupied with bottles of horse liniments and boxes of condition powders.

In consequence of so much attention "that horse" grew important, and indulged himself in various little harmless freaks, such as driving Mr. Binks from the stall, with gentle elevation of hind quarters, and playful chawing of arms and legs inside of broadcloth, by sharp equine wheat crackers.

"That horse" likewise formed the somewhat unpleasant habit of going off before anybody else was ready, and the spectacle of Binks, with his wife in the chaise, a couple of children screaming behind, and "that horse" executing a series of redoubts with Binks, hatless, clinging to the reins, had become so common in the street of the Binkses, that the small boys did not even leave off playing marbles to see the fun.

A. C.

STEAM is the great power that moves the machinery of the world, electricity flashes the intel-

gence of the markets and fluctuations in stocks, instantaneously from continent to continent. Advertising in a nether irresistible lever, setting on the fulcrum of intelligence, which awakens activity, stimulates competition and moves the commerce of the world. Sagacious and practical men know it and act accordingly.

COUNTRY BOARDING.

"WHERE shall we go for the summer?"

This question is being largely discussed now at breakfast and dinner and tea, and no doubt enters largely into the curtail lectures which paterfamilias is forced to listen to after he stretches his aristocratic limbs to court "tired Nature's sweet restorer" on his bedstead.

The advantages of seaside and mountain and lake retreats are summed up and viewed in every light, and all the family, collectively and individually, relate their experience in country boarding.

Nobody who is anybody stays in London through the heated term; it is so unfashionable, and one might as well be dead as out of the fashion, and so the stampede takes place.

The head of the family, who is supposed to have important business relations "in town," is expected to run up to Poplar Lodge once a week to bring the news, the last fashion plate, and a box of goodies.

The "earthly Paradise" where boarders are taken in is generally a square, two-storeyed modern house, painted white. The front door, which is green, is in the middle of the structure, and there will usually be found three red poppies and a half-dozen marigolds in a little flower-bed beside the front steps.

The boarders are put to sleep in a chamber which has the sun all day. The furniture of this chamber consists of a yellow bedstead, surmounted by a feather-bed weighing about fifty pounds and a flock bed of about the same bulk, two bolsters, four pillows and a patchwork quilt of red and green calico, "pieced" in "window-sash" pattern.

A chair has to be called into requisition in getting safely into this bed; and even then a person has to be very expert to accomplish the feat without accident.

And after you are safely landed there, if you do not find yourself surrounded by animated nature, emanating from the secret places of this wonderful bedstead, you need to thank your stars.

There will be a round, braided mat by the side of the bed; the bureau will be glorified by two green wool lamp mats, chief d'oeuvre of Angeline Maria's genius; and there will be four wooden-bottomed chairs, which will give you the spinal disease to look at; a yellow washstand, with a cracked blue pitcher, and a cake of Castle soap reposing in a broken saucer; a looking glass, 6 by 10, with a peacock's feather over the top of it; a wall basket made out of an old hoop-skirt; two plaster of Paris specimens of statuary, a pine cone vase, and a pincushion sewed on the bottom of a broken lamp.

There will be no cupboard in the chamber—country houses never have such conveniences—but there will be plenty of rusty-headed nails ranged around the walls of the room, on which you can exhibit your muslin dresses to the admiring manipulations of the flies.

At night, if you leave the windows open, it will be as much as your life is worth to fall asleep. Gnats, those interesting little accessories of life in the country, are abroad in hosts at the "very witching hour of night," when city boarders get ready to sleep.

If you close the windows you will suffocate; if you leave them open you will be bitten without mercy; so you can take your choice.

Of course, you cannot help thinking of your cool, tidy chamber at home, with its straw matting, and its hair mattress, and its green blinds and wire netting, and the refreshing bath which awaits you in the morning; but then you should do your best to put such foolish thoughts out of your mind, for it is so unfashionable to stay at home in the summer, even if you are comfortable.

The promised "delicacies of the season" are not forthcoming in any great variety.

Whenever you ask for new milk you are told that it is all sold to go to London. Ditto the vegetables. Ditto the eggs. Ditto the chickens. Ditto everything eatable.

The post-office will be about three miles away, and every friend you have in the world might die and be buried before a letter would reach you.

The railroad will be two miles off, and the pastures through which the path leading thereto runs will be full of prancing colts and crooked-horned bulls, and you would as soon risk yourself in an African jungle.

Paterfamilias has to run his legs nearly off every time he comes up, in order to catch the train, and as a natural consequence the head of the family swears whenever country boarding is mentioned, and everybody is shocked at his degeneracy.

But never mind. There are compensations in store for you.

You have spent the summer in the country, and can claim to be somebody. B. P.

TOM FAY'S SOLILOQUY.

"Most any female lodger up a stair
Occasions thought in him who lodges under."

Don't they, though? Not a duced thing have I been able to do since that little gipsy took the room overhand, about a week ago! Pat—pat—pat go those little feet over the floor till I am as nervous as a cat in a china closet. Then I can hear her little rocking-chair creak, as she sits there sewing, and she keeps singing, "Love not, love," just as if a fellow could help it. Wish she wasn't quite so pretty; it makes me decidedly uncomfortable.

Wonder if she has any great six-footer of a brother or cousin with a sledge-hammer flat? Wish I was her washerwoman; wish the house would catch fire to-night.

Here am I in this great barn of a room all alone, chairs and things set right up against the wall; no little feminine arrangements round; I shall have to buy a second-hand bonnet, or a little pair of gaiter-boots to cheat myself into the delusion that there's two of us. Wish that little gipsy wasn't as shy as a rabbit. I can't meet her on the stairs if I die for it; I've upset my inkstand a dozen times hopping up when I thought I heard her coming. Wonder if she knows, when she sits vegetating there, that Shakespeare, or Sam Slick, or somebody says that "happiness is born a twin"? 'cause if she don't I'm the missionary that will enlighten her. Wonder if she earns her living—poor little soul! It's time I had a wife, by Christopher! Sitting there, pricking her pretty little fingers with that murderous needle!

If she was sewing on my dickys it would be worth while now. That's it, by Jove! I'll get her to make me some dickys—don't want 'em, but that's neither here nor there. I shall insist upon her taking the measure of my throat—bachelors have a right to be fussy.

There's a pretty kettle of fish now; either she'll have to stand on a chair or I shall have to get on my knees to her. Solomon himself couldn't arrange anything better; hence take me if I couldn't say the right thing then. This fitting dickys is a work of time too. Dickys ain't to be got up in a hurry.

Hullo! there's the door-bell; there's a great big trunk dumped down in the entry! "Is Mrs. Legare at home?"

M-r-s. Legare! I like that now. Have I been in love a whole week with M-r-s. Legare? Never mind, maybe she's a widow. Tramp, tramp come those masculine feet upstairs—handsome fellow too!

N-a-b-u-c-h-a-d-n-e-z-zar! If ever I heard a kiss in my life I heard one then! I won't stand it—it's an invasion of my rights! I'll listen at the door as I'm a sinner.

"My dear husband!"—p-h-a-w! What right have sea captains to be on shore, I'd like to know? Confound it all! Well, I always knew women weren't worth thinking of—a set of deceitful little monkeys: changeable as a rainbow, superficial as parrots, as full of tricks as a conjurer, stubborn as mules, vain as peacocks, noisy as magpies, and full of the "Old Harry" all the time. There's "Delilah," now; didn't she take "strength" out of Sampson? and weren't "Sisera" and "Judith" born fends? And didn't the little mix of an Herodias dance John the Baptist's head off? Did not Sarah "raise Cain" with Abraham, till he packed Hagar off?

Then there was—well, the least said about her the better—but didn't Eve, the forerunner of the whole concern, have one talk too many with the old serpent? Of course she didn't do nothing else! Glad I never set my young affections on any of 'em! Where's my cigar-case? How tormented lut this room is!

SUBJECTS FOR THOUGHT.—"It is the solemn thought connected with middle life," says the late eloquent F. W. Robertson, "that life's last business is begun in earnest; and it is then, midway between the cradle and the grave that a man begins to realize that he let the days of youth go by so half-enjoyed. It is the pensive autumn feelings; it is the sensation of half-sadness that we experience when the longest day of the year is past, and every day that follows is hotter, and the light fainter, and the

feebler shadows tell that nature is hastening with gigantic footsteps to her winter's grave. So does man look back upon his youthful days. When the first grey hairs become visible, when the unwelcome truth fastens itself upon the mind that a man is no longer going up hill, but down, and that the sun is always westerward, he looks back on things behind. When we were children we thought as children. But now their lies before us manhood with its earnest work, and then old age and then the grave, and then the home. There is a second youth for man, better and bolder than his first, if he will look on and not look back."

THE DEATH ROSE.

Two lovers, Willie and Hattie, scarce past the days of girl and boyhood, strolled hand-in-hand from their native village, one evening in the month of roses, and paused before a thicket growing wild by the roadside, and covered over with fragrant flowers.

"See!" said the young man, as he drew the fair girl nearer to his side; "these flowers blossom in our path for us, and for us alone. Hattie," he added, seriously, "we have known each other in all our lives, and have been fond of each other in a childish way till now. Now it means more—on my side, at least. Do you love me best of all, my Hattie, as I love you? And when I come home from sea, shall I come to my own dear little promised wife?"

With a rosy blush she felt his strong arm steal about her waist, and laid her head down on his shoulder, as she whispered her answer; and then he gathered two roses from a bush which he chose for their own. One he gave to her, the other he kept himself.

"The rosebush is enchanted now, my Hattie, for you and for me," he said, with a tender smile, "and you must come here and see how its flowers bloom when I am away."

Then he led her away towards her own home to ask the blessing of their parents upon the betrothal, knowing well the while that not a day of summer would pass by, after his departure, without finding Hattie punctual at the trying-place, and reading her fate and his by the growing of the omea flower.

He joined his ship the next day, and sailed for the sea in a main.

Six months, a year, went by, and all was well. A letter came one day from Willie, saying that after a late engagement he had been promoted for gallantry; that he was soon to have a furlough, and return home, with any quantity of prize money in his purse.

"And the day after I land must be our wedding-day, my Hattie," so the letter closed. "I can support a wife now as I would wish to do, and we will spend my leave of absence together in a honeymoon trip to France. Go and tell the roses that I say so, my dearest, and may Heaven bless and protect you now and for ever more."

With this letter resting on her happy heart Hattie set off to "tell the roses," and to dream about her lover beneath the perfumed shade.

As she entered the glade where the thicket of roses grew she heard a heavy sigh, and the next instant the noise of water was in her ears, and over it all the loud voices of men, the clash of swords, and crash of guns, pistols, and cannons. Only an instant the terrific noise lasted. Then came another sigh.

"Oh, my Hattie!" said a voice beside her.

It was Willie's voice, and a withered rose dropped at her feet. She had one like it treasured up at home, but when she stooped to lift the faded token from the ground there was nothing to be seen.

Pale and breathless, she ran towards the rose-thicket. It was early in the season, and this was her first visit to the place. The twin roses had not blossomed, but hung dying on their stalks.

How she arrived home the poor girl never knew. But a sailor stood at the gate as she entered, and her mother came out to meet her, and took her in, with a pitying, tender air. They had bad news from sea, brought by one of the returned sailors of the "Flying Cloud."

Willie was dead. "Killed at the post of duty," said the officer's report. And this was what she had to "tell the roses" as they bloomed and blossomed above the sailor's grave. S. A.

PROPER EXERCISE.

WHEN we talk about exercise, we are very apt to forget that it is a many-sided word. We use it as if it referred merely to the movement of the muscles. It is necessary to health that all our powers should be exercised, and the continued disease of any one of them results in its partial or total loss. If one should lie in bed for years, without the slightest

allment, still one would lose the use of the limbs; and this is equally true of quite different faculties. All our powers grow by use. If we neglect to cultivate the habit of observation, we might as well walk through the world blindfold.

We lose our faculty—what artist call our "touch"—by neglect of practice on other things beside the piano. The man who seldom reads, reads slowly; the woman whose writing is confined to an infrequent letter to some absent child, spends more time over that than does a practised writer over a dozen pages of manuscript. In the realm of the emotions it is the same. Benevolence is largely a matter of habit. So is affection, self-control, gentleness. If then, exercise, in its largest sense, is of so great consequence, we at once see the importance of apportioning it to our own personal needs.

If our occupation is sedentary, we need to plan for walks and rides, and active games, to keep our muscles lithe and serviceable. But if our employment gives us enough muscular action, it is not one whit less important to our health of body that we should plan for mental exercise—for employment enough of our memory and our reasoning powers, to keep them from rusting. And, in either case, that life must be a diversified and unobscured one that does not provide exercise for our spiritual faculties—for worship, charity, and magnanimity. Exercise of soul, mind and body can alone bring us to the stature of the perfect man.

SCIENCE.

AN Austrian railroad engineer proposes to protect locomotive boilers against incrustation by lining them with a thin sheet of copper. An experiment shows that incrustation can be considerably reduced in this way, but there may be objections to the plan sufficient to overcome its advantages in this respect.

A SEA-WATER aquarium containing seaweeds and molluscs has been successfully maintained nearly ten years by a Belgian gentleman without a single renewal of water from the sea during the entire period. As the salt water evaporates he simply filled up the tank with fresh water, a process which, he says, has not diminished the saltness at all.

A PAIR of horns of the wild goat of Asia Minor, measuring forty-seven inches in length along the curve, were exhibited at a recent meeting of the Zoological Society. On the same occasion were shown two lower canine teeth of a hippopotamus, from South Africa, which were thirty inches from end to end around the outer curve.

THE germination of seeds may be hastened by the application of certain substances, and retarded by treating them with certain others. Some fresh researches on this subject are noticed in "Comptes Rendus" from which we learn that Hecquel has proved experimentally that the germination of some seeds, at all events, is greatly promoted by moistening them with water containing iodine, bromine, or mono-bromide of camphor. This property has long been attributed to simple camphor.

A FREE school of anthropology is to be established in Paris by the Government of that city. Anthropology, in its literal sense, is the science of man; but its scope is exceedingly comprehensive, embracing anatomy, archeology, comparative anatomy, ethnology, moral philosophy, and physiology. The character of the instruction to be given at the Paris school is shown by the courses of lectures already announced, on craniology, or the science of skulls, on human races, and on prehistoric times.

Is the index finger of the human hand longer or shorter than the ring finger? Some recent investigations have been made in Germany for the purpose of answering this question, which proves to be difficult to determine. The ring finger is the longer of the two in the case of the gorilla and the anthropoid apes generally, but so far as man is concerned, no definite conclusion has been arrived at. It appears, however, that there are more women than men who have the index finger longer than the ring finger.

THE fact has recently come to light in Germany, that poisonous aniline dye is sometimes used to colour the lining of hats. A hat with a brown leather lining was purchased at Stettin, near the Baltic Sea, by a gentleman, who began to suffer from inflammation of the head and eyes soon after he commenced wearing it. A chemical examination of the hat showed that the brown hue was imparted to the leather lining by means of a poisonous substance extracted from coal-tar, and the illness of the wearer was occasioned by the contact of the poison with his head.

THE LOST GALLEON.

A LONG stretch of beach dotted with ragged rocks, and here and there patches of wild flowers. A soft sky, unflecked with fleecy clouds, and a cool, exhilarating sea breeze.

Along the shore a youthful couple wandered, stopping now and then to pick up a richly coloured shell, or to shade their eyes, and gaze over the expanse of blue waters.

The girl was smaller than her companion, who was a youth of one-and-twenty. She was his junior by four years, and very beautiful. Her dark hair blew in luxuriant tresses from beneath her hat, and a bouquet of beach flowers and ferns was held in her hand.

"Do let us rest awhile on these old rocks," she said to her companion.

"Rest! I thought you never grew tired!" he answered; "but here beside the Druids' Spring we will tarry. Rosaline, I wish we had a boat. Then, instead of resting here, we would go to sea."

Her pretty cheeks turned pale, and a shudder crept over her frame.

"Are you chilly, Rosaline?" he said, noticing all this; "the winds get so cool towards sundown. Perhaps we had best move on."

"No, no, I am not cold. Did I shiver?"

"Yes."

"Oh, 'twas nothing, I assure you, Herbert. I am an habitual shiverer," and her smile displayed two rows of pearly teeth. "How pleasant it is here! Some people think we call this place the Druids' Spring because some of the stones look like those found at Stonehenge; but you know we do not."

"Yes, I have heard the curious legend, Rosaline. What fertile imaginations some people have! Your Druid is as mythical as the Flying Dutchman. It is a pretty fable—the story—that is all."

He smiled pleasantly while he spoke, and Rosaline Calden listened attentively.

She was the only daughter of the banker of the town, not far from the spot called the Druids' Spring. She had just completed her seventeenth year, and the doors of a noted seminary had lately closed behind her. Accomplished, and boasting of more than a superficial education, Rosaline returned to Seabury to become its belle. Some said she had learned ecquetry, to the spoiling of her youthful heart.

Her father was a proud man and a great stickler for riches. He believed in wealth in the family, and had been heard to say, much to the chagrin of Seabury's beaux, that his child's husband should bring her a sum equal to the dowry she would receive from the Calden coffers.

Taken aback at this prospect, which the banker never took pains to contradict, the young lords of Seabury looked for sweethearts whose dowries were not so large as Rosaline's. They prophesied that some counterfeit duke or peer would suddenly come to Seabury and carry off Rosaline and her dowry of one hundred thousand pounds.

Seabury was a place where few vessels stopped. Its wharfrage was not first-class, and the pretentious ships kept aloof. But now and then a merchantman would anchor without the cove, and the captain's gig approach the town. The arrival of an officer of the navy was certain to create a stir, and the magnates of the village usually sought his acquaintance.

It was a captain's gig that landed Herbert Reef in Seabury. Then he held an ear in his white hand, and his youthful face was very handsome.

His kinship to Captain Seacrust obtained him an introduction to John Calden, the banker, and in the moneyed institution he first encountered Rosaline.

The young couple at once became friends, and the banker did not appear to notice the acquaintance until the young sailor began to take long walks on the beach with Rosaline. For the "Gipsy Queen" had sailed away, and Herbert, having been released by his relative, stood behind an accountant's desk in the seaboard town.

"Rosaline," the banker one day said to his daughter, whom he surprised in the parlour, writing on her portable desk, "your aunt wants you to visit her in Scotland, and I have decided that you shall go."

The girl started and looked surprised.

"Papa, this is sudden," she said; "and it is a hundred miles journey."

"But you will love the journey; the beach is there too, and there are shells, aunt says, fairer than those of Seabury."

So Rosaline consented to go to her aunt, and when the banker left the room he murmured:

"I will nip this foolish match in the bud. What is he that he seeks my daughter, when she has had no experience in love? Does he think that I would

give her to a man whose purse is empty and well worn? Her trip will cure her girlish passion, and Mary will see that she finds a new lover, who has the gold and the manliness of a true man."

That day Herbert Reef, enjoying a brief vacation from his desk, went down to the beach, and encountered Rosaline. He saw that something troubled her, but as they walked beside the waves he told her not.

For many moments after their little chat about the legend of Druids' Spring no word was spoken.

Each seemed busy with thought; her visit was uppermost in Rosaline's mind, but she was afraid to tell him that they were to separate.

Once or twice it was on her tongue, but she held her peace, and dropped her eyes when she saw that he had noticed her.

"I am going away," he said, suddenly, and without warning.

That broke the silence and the spell.

"So am I."

"You, Rosaline?"

"Me—Rosaline Calden."

"Where are you going?"

"A hundred miles north as the crow flies."

He looked into her eyes, studying.

"To Glasgow, almost?" he asked.

"Almost!" she echoed. "Now, where are you going?"

"I do not know."

She smiled faintly.

"Going to leave Seabury, and with no course chosen? Herbert, you must be dreaming!"

"I never dream when the sun is high," he said. "I should have told you that I have an idea of my destination."

"Will you tell me?"

"You will laugh at my folly."

"Try me," she replied, seriously, "yes, try me Herbert Reef."

"Listen. It is like the legend of this spring," he said. "Ninety years ago a ship sailed from Barcelona. She was loaded with specie in Spanish doubloons, and the value thereof in our currency is almost fabulous."

Rosaline opened her dark eyes, and in astonishment repeated the value of the shining cargo.

"On the vessel were some important State papers sealed in metallic cases. These papers are wanted by the present Spanish administration, which offers a tempting reward for their recovery."

"The vessel was lost on that voyage, then?" said Rosaline.

"Yes, it was her last voyage, for she never reached her destination. Now, Rosaline, I am going to find her."

"You?" cried the beautiful girl, in amazement.

"You going to hunt for a ship that has been lost ninety years! You have heard of the fruitless search for Kydd's treasure, and the expeditions after poor Sir John Franklin?"

"And the hunt for the philosopher's stone," added Herbert, with a smile. "Yes, Rosaline, I have heard of all these things; but failures do not daunt me. Yesterday's mail brought me a letter from Captain Seacrust. His heart is enlisted in the hunt for the 'White Angel,' as the Spaniards called the ill-fated ship. He pretends to have some trustworthy information concerning her whereabouts. The 'Gipsy Queen' will soon be here; then I board her for the great sail."

Rosaline stepped back and laughed derisively till his cheeks grew red, and his white teeth bit his lip vexatiously.

"Are you bent upon going?" she said, suddenly assuming a serious countenance.

"Certainly. I may be gone against to-morrow night. I came to the beach to-day half expecting to see the 'Queen's' white sails. You think I chase an ignis fatuus?"

"You chase a shadow!" she said, with a half-hidden sneer. "Herbert Reef, I did not expect such a chimera in your brain."

"It is there, notwithstanding your expectation," he smiled; but spoke with determination. "I am going!"

"Then good-bye. We may never meet after this day," and with the last word she stooped over a bush of beach roses that grew near the spring.

Standing erect, Herbert Reef watched intently, and saw the pallor that came to her face.

When she had plucked several stems of flowers she rose and looked seaward, forgetting, as it were, the young man who almost touched her. For a long time she stood thus, speaking not; waiting, perhaps, for him to say a word to break the stillness.

The minutes wore away, and when, out of patience with her exhibition of self-will, the banker's daughter turned with the word "Herbert" on her lip, no being was in sight.

Herbert Reef had disappeared like a ghost.



[AT THE DEVIDS' SPRING.]

Rosaline stood confounded, and the flowers and ferns fell from her nerveless hands.

"I am to blame!" were her first words. "He loves me, and he could not brook the look I gave him, nor the answer. Well do I know what leads him to the chase of that Spanish galleon. He dares not ask my father for my hand when he cannot show the gold that is demanded. Now he hears of the sunken treasure, and that he may win me with it he imperils his noble life. Oh! Herbert Reef, do not leave me thus without a word. Return, and I will become thine, though your empty purse wears your pockets out."

But Herbert Reef was not in sight, and when Rosaline turned from the spot the white sails of a vessel appeared in sight far over the waste of sea.

That evening a boat put off from a ship anchored just beyond the little cove, and Captain Seacrust sought his young kinsman in town. He found him with head bowed on his desk, and when addressed, he said:

"I am ready. The sooner we leave Seabury, the better for my life!"

The captain stared aghast at these words; but did not question the youth, and when the morning dawned the "Gipsy Queen" was far away.

"Fill your glasses, signors! I propose the health of the beautiful senora."

These words fell from the lips of a tall Cuban, and the room in which they were spoken was filled with men. The occasion which had brought them together was a grand banquet given by a prominent citizen of Havana. It was night, and the windows were open, and the voices of the revellers reached the ears of the persons in the street below.

"Drink!" cried a man at the head of the table, "happiness eternal to Senor a Calden."

Then richly chased goblets flew to moistened lips, and amid enthusiasm the toast was drunk.

"What do I hear? Her name! What does the mention of it mean among those revellers?"

He who uttered these words was an emaciated man who had paused suddenly beneath the banquet chamber, at whose lights he was staring like a man suddenly bereft of his senses. He wore the faded uniform of a midshipman, and looked like the forlorn victim of some great shipwreck.

It was the name uttered by the host that had brought him to a halt, and he stood for a long time listening with upturned face.

All at once two heads darkened one of the windows, and the startling name again fell upon his ears.

"I shall capture her, Alfonsez," said one of the

parties above. "She has no heart, and is as fickle as April weather. This Senora Rosaline Calden never can love. I want her money, not her heartless form."

A shade of resentment flitted over the face of the man in the street, and with an exclamation of rage he seized a pebble and tossed it at the speaker.

It hit him fairly in the face.

An angry exclamation followed the indignity, and the young man shouted, madly:

"I threw the stone, carajo! Earth owns no greater dog than the cur who has insulted the pure name of Rosaline Calden. Come down if you dare, and face the man who brands you a villain of the deepest dye."

A shout of defiance followed the last word, and the heads left the window. Several minutes later a brace of Spanish officers faced the pale man on the footway and inquired for the person who had dared them from the banquet hall.

"Seek him no farther. He is here!" was the reply.

"Here? You, carajo!"

"I am the defender of Rosaline Calden's good name."

"Who are you? Colonel Garcia does not fight pale boys," was the sneering rejoinder.

"Pale boys!" was the echo, and the speaker, stepping back, drew a short dress sword. "I am a man, and as such challenge the Cuban cur to meet me at the point of the sword. My name is Herbert Reef, and though I have dwelt for months on a sea-girt shore a woman's honour nerves me anew. Fight me if you dare!"

The sword was out, and with the last word Herbert Reef struck an insignia of rank from the officer's shoulder.

Colonel Garcia started forward, and the next instant the clash of swords was heard. A few blows told the Cuban and his second that the young man was no novice in the art of fencing; but his antagonist was the stronger, and bore him back. Soon Herbert's weapon was knocked from his grasp, and he found himself at the mercy of his enraged foe.

"I am disarmed!" he cried, as Garcia came towards him with threatening blade. "Let me recover my sword, and then I will meet you again."

But his request was not complied with—a word from his second seemed to hurl Colonel Garcia forward, and the next moment Herbert Reef was stretched motionless on the narrow road.

Carelessly wiping his sword as he smiled at his friend, the Cuban officer turned on his heel, and the twain returned to the banquet.

Herbert Reef managed to crawl from the spot and secured the notice of a sailor belonging to a vessel in the harbour. The burly tar lifted him from the ground, and an hour later he reposed unconsciously on board the "Swatara."

The ship's surgeon shook his head doubtfully when he examined the wound, and murmurs of revenge ran over the deck.

All through the night, with scant hopes of recovery, lay the victim of Garcia's steel, while the colonel stood over the table and drank the ruby wines of Cuba.

The morning was not far advanced when a boat brought an old gentleman and a beautiful woman to the vessel.

"We want to see the wounded man," said the former.

The "Swatara's" captain led the pair to Herbert Reef's cot, and when the woman's eyes fell upon his pale face she exclaimed:

"Father, it is Herbert Reef!"

The old man approached, and for a long time did not speak.

"A noble young man," he said at last, as he turned to the captain. "He received his wound while resenting the wrong offered my daughter's honour. Such gallantry shall not go unrewarded."

The speaker was John Calden, the banker; the tearful woman, whose face almost touched the sufferer, was his daughter Rosaline.

Three years had passed away since the sudden parting on the beach of Seabury, and during that time Rosaline had developed into a magnificent woman.

And Herbert Reef? Had he found the lost galleon and her immense treasure? Alas for his hopes, nay! The winds seized the "Gipsy Queen," and broke her to pieces on the breakers of an unknown coast, and hurled the gold hunter upon a bleak island. After many days of solitary residence there a vessel found him, and conveyed him to Havana, its destination. The lost doubloons were far away, and his hands would never touch them—his eyes never see their quaint but precious letters.

But after all, he did not need them to win the woman he loved. His defence of her name won John Calden's heart, and he allowed Rosaline to watch beside the cot on shipboard, until of Garcia's cowardly blow there was no sign save a scar.

Then the banker's tropical tour ended, and when he and Rosaline returned to Seabury Herbert Reef was not missing. Though he did not find the lost galleon, he found a true wife, and the dowry he gave her was a love tested by the trials of years.

A. F. G.



[WINNING THE VICTORIA CROSS.]

OLD RUFFORD'S MONEY; OR, WON WITHOUT MERIT, LOST WITHOUT DESERVING.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"Fightin' for Freedom," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Then dress, then dinner, then awakes the world;
Then glare the lamps, then whirl the wheels their roar,
Through street and square fast-flashing chariots hurried
Like harnessed meteors: then along the floor,
Chalk mimics painting: the festoons are twirled:
Than roll the mimic thunders of the door,
Which opens to the thousand—happy few!
And earthly paradise of—or mola.

Byron.

PINK-STRIPED awnings were stretched between the columns, from the front wall to the balcony-railings, and a similar covered way extended across the pavement, over a strip of crimson carpet leading up the hall steps of No. — Eaton Square. Bright lights shone from crystal chandeliers, and the odour of exotic flowers filled the heavy summer air, while the strains of Coote's or Tinney's band were heard ever and anon discoursing the most fashionable polkas, schottisches, mazurkas, and galops of the day. The square and the adjoining streets were ablaze with the powerful reflectors of numerous carriage lamps, and the roadway resounded with their high-stepping horses, while the Jeameses and Mary Hanns were on the qui vive, watching the arrivals at Mr. Bushby Frankland's first grand party of the season.

Within all was bustle and squeeze, and the buzz of conversation was only dominated by the stentorian announcements of the style, title, and names of the great and great-little personages, who were bidden to the fashionable mobbing facetiously described as an "at home," with "dancing at 10," in the left-hand corner of a card as large as a modest door-plate.

The honours of the house were done by Bushby Frankland himself, assisted by his elder sister, Mrs. Hartwell, the wife of a Leicestershire gentleman of good property, who, as the only niece of Old Rufford, had also come in for a slice of the "money," which has so much influenced the lives and worldly career of the personages who figure in this veracious history. She was, like her brother, a handsome specimen of the Saxon race, "fat, fair, and forty," with a person not inelegant, though embourgeois, and with physique and good humour that never tired;

just the woman, in short, to put everybody at their ease, as she herself always was. Mrs. Hartwell, too, had four fine girls, from nineteen down to fourteen years, rude in health, hearty and unaffected in manners, accomplished horsewomen—at least the two eldest—and these also aided their mamma in the details of getting up "Uncle Bushby's at home." As to the lists of invites outside the Broadmoor and Leicestershire friends and relatives, they had the able assistance of Cecilia's quondam dear friend, the Hon. Miss Beverley, and "Honourable" brother in the Foreign Office, Algernon Beverley, who suggested and filled in so many of their friends and acquaintances from the "Blue Book" and "Who's Who?" as would have doubled the party had only half of them "looked in." But we must descend from generals to particulars, and cull a few of the names in which we have a more special interest. Among these we find Lord Pennington and his daughter, the Hon. Lady Augusta P.; Sir Robert Perceval, Mr. Pennington Perceval, and Miss Amina Perceval; Mr. Ralph Chesterton, and his daughter Cecilia Chesterton; the Misses Hartwell (four); Dr. Halliwell, M.D.; Colonel Duberley, Hon. E.L.C.S.; the Dowager Lady Spadille; the Hon. Fitzalan Pierrepont; the Rev. Doctor Sherlock and Lady, and Lieutenant Sherlock, R.N.; Mrs. Colonel Macgregor, and the Misses Macgregor (three), etc., etc. We need hardly tell the reader that the name of Reginald Chesterton was not among the invited, as that gentleman would have been an "incompatible" in any party which included the Percevals.

Apropos of the last-named lady, whose name precedes the sciters of our list, we may observe that in the interval bridged over by our last chapter the lady-colonel had scraped an acquaintance with Bushby Frankland, and had, with her "three graces," as she called her Amazonian daughters, presided at as many stalls at a fancy bazaar in aid of a charity in which Bushby Frankland had interested himself.

At this gathering the Macgregors had distanced all rivals, not only in the variety and exorbitant prices of their trumpery, but in the matchless effrontery and irresistible importunity with which they plied their trade of benevolent pickpockets. Indeed the way they got rid of jointed penny dolls for sixpences and shillings to bashful young bachelors was something quite unprecedented. As to the eldest, she presided over a wheel of fortune, by the revolution of which, on the insertion of a silver coin, prizes worth from a penny to fourpences were declared, and handed over by a little child, while the "fickle goddess of the ever-rolling

wheel" solely in a fancy mythological costume which included a handsome scarf around her head, which certainly did not blindfold her.

The youngest lady, too, exhibited a goodly list of sales of parti-coloured rag penwipers, sold at sixpence each, of sixpenny picnashions producing half-a-crown, and of some wonderful Highlanders in worsted work, clad in the distinctive tartan and wearing the badge of the great clans, on which the lady-colonel was so eloquently erudite and genealogical that their sale was unprecedented.

Altogether, their exertions did so much for the funds, besides bringing the widow and the "three Graces" prominently into note, that ever since the widow and the Misses Macgregor had never missed receiving pasteboard on the occasion of all public festivities at Broadmoor, Smethwick Hall, or at Eaton Square. Hence their presence on this occasion, and hence mamma's determination that they would "do London this year, instead of one of those crowded and vulgar watering-places, which are so sadly degenerated since these low fares, steamboats and excursion tickets." At least so she announced her resolve to her "dear Mrs. Chatterly," she being one of those sort of persons who are very well in their proper place—that is at home—but not the people one would like to know when one is out in society.

Such were a few of the grand party at No. — Eaton Square, the rooms and even staircases and passages of which were fast filling to repletion. The evening was sultry, and the arrivals after ten, when dancing was announced to begin, were fast raising the crush to a small imitation of a drawing-room at St. James's Palace on a State reception day, with this advantage in favour of the commoners' gathering, that the guests were not only abundantly supplied with ices, coffee and light wines, but, besides buffets in the great dining-room at the rear of the ground floor, the garden was almost covered by a spacious Edgington marquee, magnificently decorated with exotics and multiplying mirrors, in which four rows of tables and a cross one on the farther dais were heaped in profusion with "every delicacy of the season," flanked by the choicest wines and liquors. In this, at any rate, the loyal Bushby Frankland's "at home" put royalty to starvation and shame.

The whirl and hum and murmuring chatter, the exchange of compliments among the "wallflowers" who lined the walls of the dancing saloons, the sostenuto of the most fashionable cornet-player of the day and the "maudy-triicking feet" of the waltzers were all in full career when two of the guests,

lady and gentleman, retired from the principal ball room, the lady leading the way into the conservatory, passing through which she descended a side staircase communicating with the large marquee wherein supper was laid, as already mentioned.

Their movements were evidently the result of a previous conversation.

The gentleman had followed thus far when the lady turned with an affable look, and said, mildly:

"Mr. Percival, I am obliged by your ready attention to my wish. I cannot, in justice to myself, to my father, to your sister and to your parent, nay, to yourself, allow this evening to pass over without a full and candid explanation of our position towards each other. I must trespass a little on that friendship I hope ever to retain by asking you directly whether you intend to bury in oblivion the unadvised and painful declaration you once, I would fain hope in a moment of transitory passion, made to me. Nay, pause a moment," said she, raising her hand deprecatingly as she saw he was about to speak; "my happiness, my future position with your beloved sister, with your father, and your own with the amiable and noble lady to whom you are, in the estimation of your own family, affianced, depend on this night's decision. I ask you, I implore you not again to address me upon this subject. If you decide otherwise, if you have not resolution to make such a promise, I should for ever despise myself did I accept, as she has this night accorded to me, the friendship and confidence of Lady Augusta Pennington, for whose kindness and trust I am indebted to your dear sister Amina. Do you think I can bear about with me such a secret, except upon one condition, that you immediately and solemnly promise that you will never again address me but as a friend?"

"Noblest and best of women," said the young man, with sincere and honest warmth, "how little know I myself how low I must seem in your eyes. Believe me, Miss Chesterton, though the trial is a sore one, I will endure it bravely and manfully. I will think of your excellences, of my dear sister Amina's love, of my father's happiness, which I know is bound up in my future, and, thus served, I will do what you command me. I will never again insult you with the mention of my unworthy love."

"Say not unworthy, Mr. Percival; you are improperly depreciating yourself. The love of a worthy man is the highest life-reward the best of women can aspire to; and she who wins and wears Pennington Percival's name and affection may be well carried. But that woman is not, cannot be, Cecilia Chesterton. Did she ever think of this she would be false to her friend, a traitor to her best benefactor, a scorpion to sting the heart of the most loving of parents. No, my path of duty is clear. It is to be the friend of your wife, of your sister—" she hesitated for a moment—"ay, and of yourself." She turned away with deep emotion in her voice and departed by the door by which they had entered.

The young man's reverie, for he watched her exit in a sort of rapt admiration, was most rudely broken.

"Upon my word, Mr. Pennington, you are a sad truant," exclaimed Mrs. Colonel Macgregor advancing from a side entrance to the tent, followed by the "three Graces" in the latest fashionable address; "where have you been hiding yourself?"

"They had been watching the little episode we have narrated from an alcove."

"Here is my Lady Pennington—bless me how wonderfully these names do coincide—yes, Lady Augusta has been looking for you; and Victoria, and Helena, and Alice, and I have been walking up and down the rooms; and here we find you in the supper-room and nobody to take her down! Oh, do, Mr. P., I'm quite ashamed of you, I am; you naughty man!"

And she playfully tapped the indignant and half choked young baronet on the arm with her ponderous carved Indian fan. What young Percival's reply might have been we can scarcely imagine, but it was instantly suppressed by the mischievous old woman cleverly presenting to him Augusta Pennington, whom the "girls" had brought down with them—of course, by chance—hoping to create a pretty little imbroglio by bringing together the hated Miss Chesterton, young Percival's bride-in-expectance, Lady Pennington, and the unlucky bridegroom in posse. For to their coarse minds the retirement of Cecilia followed by Pennington, which they had narrowly watched, would be the certain prelude to a repetition of the little scene in the Laurel Walk of which dear Mrs. Chatterley had given them so vividly and graphically a picture. The result, however, baffled their kind anticipation. They had seen the distant respect with which young Percival listened, and heard the almost stately tone in which Cecilia spoke, and at once perceived that they had miscalculated their little game. So Mrs. Macgregor whispered to Helena to lose no time in seeking out Lady Augusta and inveigling her down, on any pretext, to where she

might unexpectedly come upon Cecilia and her supposed innamorato. Their amiable intentions were as we have seen, frustrated, for before another word could be exchanged Pennington had politely taken the arm of Lady Augusta, made a laughing excuse for his absence, and, turning nonchalantly on Mrs. Macgregor and her daughters, said:

"Oh, Mrs. Macgregor, how kind of you to find Lady Pennington. How long have you been here, Augusta?"

"Not ten minutes, father and I have been to Lady Dorchester's."

"I'm exceedingly obliged—exceedingly, my dear Mrs. Macgregor," and he looked, as Mr. Sprouts has it, "a whole box of carving-knives, and forks too," at her; "how good to find me, so quickly too! Augusta, have you seen Cecilia Chesterton?" He again glanced, this time meaningly, at the Macgregors; "she has just left here, and will be so glad to see an old friend;" then with a slight bow he led the lady to the salon de danse.

"What do you think of that, mamma?" asked the youngest Miss Macgregor; "I think Vic has made a mess of it altogether by her clumsy way of what she calls dancing. What could she propose to herself by bringing down Lady Augusta? Did she think Miss Prudence and Prosperity—I beg her pardon, St. Cecilia, I mean, would be caught blissing in a corner, like a milliner's girl and a shopman at a shilling dancing-room?"

"Victoria Macgregor, madam, is less acquainted than you seem to be with the manners and customs of shopmen and shopgirls at shilling dances and so to blissing in corners, though I don't suppose any man of taste would be likely to—"

"Sh—sh—sh, my lamb. Let me implore you to reserve any remarks you may—Oh, there's Major Brydges bringing down the Dowager Lady Spadille, yes, and there are half a dozen couples following them. Don't lose time, dear girls, or you'll have to take the late comers to be brought down at all. Vic," in a whisper, "there's old Colonel Dabberley upstairs, I saw him a little while since last young Florioport carry off his daughter. Dabberley's a widower, and he won't get hold of the girl again, I'll warrant, till his carriage is called. Old Dabberley's fond of getting a good seat and a good start at supper, and, mind, he has a preference for crayfish over lobster, and will drink no French wines. Madeira, or some brown and East Indian particular, is his speciality. These little things, my dear Vic, when a man has passed his meridian, are the attentions that are best appreciated. Ah, my dear girls, I could tell you much more, but this is not the time. I knew old Dabberley at Cudderspoore, up in the hills. Heigho! it's some years since, before your dear father died. He was hooked by a grass widow, who filled his glass and his plate with what he liked best and, though they said he was a confirmed bachelor, talked him into matrimony with herself, ay, and her daughter, for that dark-eyed girl isn't his, though she bears his name, and with, if he don't marry again, have his money. He's a little soft as to the sex, and—"

"Mamma, I think you might address yourself to me," said Helena, caustically. "Vic has just had two flirtations with—"

"Nay, nay, my dearest Helena, I did not mean to slight you, but the colonel is not so suitable for a young person of your age."

Helena was mollified, though she could not help glancing and smiling sarcastically at her dear elder sister.

"Yes, I have a younger spark in view for you. Bushby Frankland is by no means cautious, and I mean to astonish the company by hooking you on to the master of the feast. But this is no place for talking. Come along, girls. Vic, I will fix the colonel in a conversation about old times. Be at hand and come up. I will lead him nearly to the stairs-head, then suddenly introduce you, and he can't get off without positive rudeness, which is not in him, I know. Once at supper you must play your own cards. I have told you the trumps. Bye-bye, and don't lose sight of me. Once more, come, girls—this is a critical night."

And away bustled the old matrimonial campaigner, displaying her tactics by overflanking the colonel precisely on her own selected ground, taking him unsuspectingly prisoner, and just as the old gentleman was getting a trifle bored by the dreadful tax she was laying on his somewhat muddled memories of Indian scenes and doings and meditating a retreat, she brought up her reserve in the shape of her Bellona-like daughter, and poor old Colonel Dabberley surrendered unconditionally, and was marched off captive to supper, where his heart was soon reached by what Theodore Hook says is the shortest way with short-necked persons, namely down his oesophagus, with what result the reader who perseveres will find out in an after-part of the history.

As to the other manoeuvre of the strategic Mrs. Colonel Macgregor, in the matter of Bushby Frankland, how it failed utterly is but another proof of the glorious uncertainty which attends love, war and law. It happened in this wise:

It was past one o'clock, and a large relay of supper eaters had again crowded the marquee, leaving the other rooms comparatively relieved.

Dr. Sherlock was presumably about to take down Amina Percival, who had stayed until the cessation of the music at the finish of the first part of the ball programme, when, meeting his son, that young lady so readily accepted the young officer's proffered arm that the vicar returned to the reception room, where he found Bushby Frankland in deep converse with his sister, Mrs. Hartwell. The squire seemed unusually embarrassed at his appearance, and with a hurried excuse made his exit, nor was he again seen for more than half an hour. There was evidently some little mystery in the wind, and the worthy clergyman, knowing that all little secrets are revealed to those who know how to wait for them, made himself easy, and gossiped pleasantly with Mrs. Hartwell.

Cecilia Chesterton had not recovered the reaction consequent on the effort—for it had cost her an effort—of her interview with Pennington Percival; her hand ached slightly, and she felt herself for a time unequal to mix with the gay and giddy throng. To avoid questioning by her parent, therefore, she had retired to the library, and there, enjoying the comparative silence, though within earshot of the subdued sound of voices and music, had taken down that charming volume called "The Household of Sir Thomas More." Seating herself in a leather chair, she soon became absorbed in its pictures of the single-minded old scholar, and fancied she could trace a similarity in character, kindness, domestic virtues, and inflexibility of principle, to her beloved father, and she was just wishing that she, like Margaret Roper, his daughter and biographer, might record his goodness to posterity, when she became aware of somebody near; she looked up, and there stood Bushby Frankland, with such an unmistakable expression of melancholy on his jolly visage as positively startled her.

"Mr. Frankland!" and she let fall the book. The squire caught her hand; "I'm a plain man, Miss Chesterton," said he, in a half-checked voice, and would wish to speak plainly. There is but one woman in the world I would wish to see mistress of all these books and pictures and he who owns them without appreciating them at their just value. I feel there is a disparity in our years, but I feel also, though it is only lately, that as Doctor Sherlock said last Sunday, it is not good for man to be alone. I am a plain man, and bad at this love-making, but I would ask you, my dear Miss Chesterton, my dearest Miss Chesterton—and you are the first woman I have thus addressed since my dear mother's death,—will you, if I obtain the consent of your father, accept this right hand, and with it all that I possess? The happiness of my life in this world I feel depends upon your answer."

He had dropped the lady's hand at the close of this speech; she raised it herself and placed it in his.

"Bushby Frankland, I am not mine own to give, and your question is one which I cannot suddenly or lightly answer. I will myself speak to my father, and on his last robe your and my fate. More I cannot now say, but of this you may rest assured, that my hand is as free as my heart, and that I will engage neither without Bushby Frankland sharing my confidence. Adieu for the present, your guests will miss you."

It was from this interview that Bushby Frankland had come, and he had just communicated its particulars to Mrs. Hartwell when the vicar had interrupted them.

The more, however, the squire thought it over the more at ease he became; he battled about, grew positively merry, and after occasioning several dowagers and not a few damsels to speak of the high spirits and jollity of their host, he ended by firing Ralph Chesterton by the buttonhole, and in ten minutes possessing him of the astounding fact of his proposal and conditional acceptance by Cecilia Chesterton.

But "there's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip," says Sancho Panza, and many mortals since the squire of the Knight of La Mancha have found its truth. An event was about to take place which prevented Bushby Frankland and Cecilia from talking love for many a day. What that was a future chapter will disclose.

CHAPTER XIX.

NO MAN who knew London a quarter of a century since, still less those who can recall the London of the fourth George and his successor the fourth William, can doubt of the immense improvement in order.

sobriety, and at least outward decency which the great metropolis has made under an organized police, demolished slums, rebuilt streets and buildings, and, above all, an improved tone of public morals and behaviour, enforced, it must be confessed, by repressive legislation and an active magistracy.

At the time we write of some of the largest buildings in Leicester Square and its vicinity were what were coarsely but appropriately termed "halls;" a slang synonym for gaming-house. The quality of these was further described by the prefix "silver" and "copper," while "golden" Pandemonium threw wide their doors in St. James's Street, Piccadilly, Jermyn Street, Bury Street, Pall Mall, and almost every adjacent street.

Most of these had some few discounters and money-lenders, or notorious "laxymen" for its proprietor, and for "groom porter" some ci-devant pugilist, or returned convict; while supplementary to these man-traps were the "night-houses," dens of debauchery, drunkenness, and worse, rejoicing in quaint titles. These dens never closed their doors during the hours of darkness, or indeed at any hour, to the wine-flushed diner-out, the street-roysterer the fighting ruffian, the gambler, the betting-sharp, the thief, and his confederate.

Though its immorality and excess yet exist, they are not now so brazen; and intoxication, violence, vice, and riot do not infect our streets as in the time of our fathers. It is not our intention to pursue the subject farther than to mention this deplorable state of the "west or worst end of the city," as far as it immediately connects itself with the incidents of our story, as showing one of the roads by which the "facilis descensus avari" was presented to young men, and the way made steep for those who might in vain wish to retrace their steps and retrieve their position in the world of credit, honour, and respectability.

We will look in on the night we propose for our visit at the ground floor of a well-known house in Leicester Square. It was at the time devoted to Billiards; a portion of its large space to a sparing exhibition in aid of a defeated prizefighter; upstairs was a public ball, while the basement was an oyster and refreshment room, where illicit drinking of spirits and wines, "after hours," i.e. midnight, was rather the rule than the exception. On the night in question there were the accustomed frequenters of the billiard saloon. There were the inevitable marker, a broken-down "swell," a sot-dismal Captain Dubourg, formerly a valet, or gentleman's gentleman (an adept with the cue); two or three "bonnets," by which is meant fellows who induce incautious visitors to play, for the benefit of the proprietor, or of themselves; a few, silly fast, young men, clerks, or the like, in city or west-end houses, who fancied their skill on the board of green-cloth, but who were ruining their health, morals, pocket, and character, in the process of "sowing their wild oats;" a "country cousin" or two brought by a "friend" to see what was called "London life." Occasionally a "billiard sharp" looked in casually for a victim, or "pigeon," exchanging mysterious signals with the habitués and servants; together with three or four professionals, a term applied to the paid sizers at "after the theatre" concert-rooms and cock-and-hen-clubs, the precursors of the modern music-hall, which is certainly, notwithstanding many objectionable features, a vast improvement upon its predecessors. These, however, disappeared from the scene before midnight, and were succeeded by yet worse characters.

It was approaching midnight, when a somewhat loud-talking party of half a dozen young men ascended the semi-circular steps of the house, and entered the billiard saloon. The irregular group consisted of a couple of Templars, a criminal court barrister, fond of old port and the pleasures of the table, a young surgeon of good family and honoured name, still "walking the hospital," and attending lectures in statu populi, of an eminent medical practitioner; a second-rate comedian, a racehorse trainer and betting-man, the "tipster" of more modern times; a professor of "the noble art of self defence, and, we grieve to write it, Reginald Chesterton himself, who had just been "assisting" as the French say, at a "cane soiree" in Windmill Street hard by, where "the renegade Tom Cobb" (not the champion pugilist, but a bull terrier) had despatched his one hundred rats in eight minutes. Alas how changed was that young man from the last time we met him flyfishing near the old bridge at Broadmoor. He had grown much stouter, and was dressed in the semi-sporting costume much affected at the period by "men about town," viz., a green coat of a "cut-away" pattern with "Newmarket" or basket-buttions, trousers of dust-coloured cord, tight to the lower leg, a bright, coloured neckerchief, and a white hat, while his light hand carried the then not uncommon companion ro what was then misnamed "a sporting man"—a formidable maulsaca cane, the silver head of which

knitted over with whipcord, held within it some six ounces of lead. This deadly weapon was considered by many persons a necessary defence for those who mixed with the doubtful characters then infesting the mixed company of "play-places," low taverns and night houses, and who saw what was originally called "life in London" after nightfall.

"Want about Stockwell for the Derby? He's at sixteen (16 to 1); I'll take it in fives," said Joe the trainer to one of the young men. "They say Dan O'Rourke has been got at, and you'll see him knocked out of the market at the Corner to-morrow. But I'll stand him and advise my friends to do so. I'll take Dan and the Chief Baron against any two you like for a place, for fifty."

"I'm full for the Chief Baron," replied one of the young men, "but I don't mind backing Joe Miller or King of Trumps if you'll lay me twenty-fives; I can get thirty in the city, 'pon honour."

"Is that anything good, Joe?" asked Reginald Chesterton of the trainer; "I want a trifle on for Wednesday, just to give me an interest."

"Back Daniel, sir," whispered Joe, earnestly; "he's the best-bred up in the race, by Irish Bird-catcher, and so is Songstress the best mare in the Oaks. Frank Butler will be up on both, and win too. John Scott says it's a moral certainty and takes all the 2 to 1's he can get."

"Do you know my man here?" asked Reginald, in a low tone, for though he had drunk deeply he was still cautious.

"Right as the bank; he's good for a thousand," replied Joe.

"I'll take 25 to 1 about Daniel O'Rourke for a place, or 30 to 1 he don't win," said Reginald.

"I'll lay 25 to 1 against Daniel," continued the young man, "to win."

"To what?" asked Reginald.

"To a tanner."

"Done!"

"Done!"

The bets were booked, and the trainer, assuring Reginald he had won the 250l. borrowed four sovereigns of that gentleman; champagne was called for, and billiards was the order of the night. After an hour's play, during the betting far exceeded the game in amount, and more of the vile champagne usual at such places, an adjournment to the lower regions to supper was proposed; sides to be taken, and the losing side to pay for the refreshments. Reginald's side, which included the two young Templars, the surgeon, and the trainer, the prize-fighter being "franked" by Reginald, and the old Bailey barrister cunningly shirking his turn at play, and joining the supper party when made up, proved the winners, when the young "city swell," as the son of a great building contractor was termed among his disreputable companions, declared that the place below was "too slow" that the "sham" was "bad cider," the "grab villanous," and that as he had to pay (he had played "off" with his fellow-sufferers and was fast losing the small medium of sense and self-control he possessed) he would go the "satine animal," and "stand the racket for a night of it."

This liberal resolve was hailed with acclamation, and the party sallied forth. A look in at "Young Dutch Sam's," by Drury Lane theatre, a supper at "Goody Levy's" in Bow Street, a bottle or two at the Garrick with Chief Baron Nicholson, "after the rising of the Court," and a dance at "Jemmy's" brought the whole party, except the old barrister, who had slipped off, to that stage of degraded inebriation which debases man below the level of the brute. The last scene, on which we drop the curtain with disgust and shame, was in a public house in the Haymarket, where the pugilist having interfered to prevent Reginald being struck by a half-drunken cabdriver a general fight ensued, the police mustered in force, and at four in the morning, as the gray dawn was struggling through the London smoke and mist, and making pale the fast-extinguishing gas-light, Reginald Chesterton, bleeding, hatless, and flushed with rage and liquor, was dragged, with some half-dozen of the very dregs of society, through Piccadilly to the Vine Street station, and thrust into a cell with his disgraceful companions, who had attempted a rescue.

A morning at Marlborough Street, and an interview with the sitting magistrate followed. Need we say that the fumes of the overnight's wine were not dissipated, and that a fine of 5l., with a similar fine on the surgeon and the two young Templars, and 40s. on the pugilist (which last Reginald paid), with a magisterial censure, concluded the wretched orgie!

But the worst had yet to come. Reginald was residing at a highly respectable boarding-house in Baywater, and the manager of the west-end branch of the bank in which Reginald held his appointment, a kindly and friendly man, leaving the bank at 11 a.m. on business, called at Terrace to inquire after Reginald's health, concluding that illness must

have occasioned his absence. His surprise was considerable when he found he was from home. Nor was his surprise lessened when, on returning to the bank, he found already there a letter from Reginald Chesterton himself, dated that morning from the house he had just left, enclosing a medical certificate of his "serious indisposition," signed ostensibly by an "M.R.C.S.," and stating (truly) that he, the signer, had "forbidden him from attending business" for a day or two.

Alas! what a tangled web we weave
When first we practise to deceive!

How changed, how degraded, how "fallen from his high estate" of probity, independence, and truth; how recalcitrant from the principle, the honour and the undeviating rectitude which his father had instilled into his youthful mind, and of which Ralph Chesterton was himself the bright exemplar!

The certificate, need we say, was the suggestion and production of his companion in folly and wickedness, the young surgeon already mentioned, whose signature being identical with a proclamation of venerable notoriety, wrung the heart of the manager with the suspicion that the son of his old and honoured friend had added the crime of forgery to the measure of subterfuge.

This, however, bad as Reginald's conduct was, was soon after cleared up by the manager fortuitously discovering, from another escapade of the same person, the coincidence of name, and also the acquaintance of Reginald with the dangerous young man who had volunteered to "quer" the "old fogey," as he termed it, and Reginald had wickedly permitted him play off what he considered a capital joke.

The false pretence, however, proved no jest, inasmuch as it destroyed the confidence which Mr. Gilbert, the manager, had previously in the honour and truthfulness of the son of his old friend Ralph Chesterton.

CHAPTER XX.

We need hardly say that the principal actors in the disgraceful drunken brawl and boat at flatulence on that morning concluding a six hours' incarceration in a filthy cell were not in a presentable state for ordinary decent society. On their discharge therefrom at about 11 a.m. on Tuesday, the 22nd of May, they adjourned in the first place, in company with some constables to a low public-house and after taking what the pugilist called "a hair of the dog that bit him," viz., a glass of spirits in which he was joined by all save Reginald, whose gorge rose at the fiery and rank-smelling liquor, the "professor of the noble art" recommended Reginald and one of the young Templars, who had each facial contusions, the latter an unmistakable black eye, to repair forthwith to a certain "artist" in Duke's Court, Windmill Street, whose renown in "painting" was based upon the skill with which he not only removed bruises and contusions but repaired and coloured them so as to escape ordinary observation.

This effected, together with a brush and a wash up, the conversation turned upon the "coming event," and the mode in which each proposed to go to the Derby on the morrow, for that everybody was going nobody seemed to doubt for a moment. Such congenial spirits soon arranged the affair. The trainer would see his friend Harry Stevens, and if they would "spring a four" beyond the regular tariff, why the spiciest turn-out, the best bred team of chestnuts and the primest whip should foot them to the Downs. The trainer received his commission, the prize-fighter was retained as body-guard and henchman, the start was fixed for twelve at Hatchett's, and a quarter past from the Circus for the latest comer, and Reginald appointed himself purveyor of the various provision hampers and extra champagne. Cabs were called, and on the proposal of one of the party, some devilled biscuits, bones, and claret were unanimously voted. They sat over their wine, which was thereafter changed for more potent eau de vie, and when Reginald shook hands with the companions of his degraded dissipation, with promises of punctuality at the morning rendezvous, he felt bitterly conscious of his unfitness for the society at his home in Baywater. He wandered almost purposeless through the piazzas of the renowned market, and was gazing with lack-lustre eye on the portico of Inigo Jones's "eclectic barn," when he was slapped on the shoulder and saluted with:

"Hilloo, old boy!"

Perceiving the negligent style of the person he was addressing, the spectator instantly added:

"On the tiles, eh? Ha, ha! just turned out myself, and precious sooty too; lost you at Goody's (he had incontinently snipped off). Did you go to Emerson's afterwards, eh?"

It was his actor companion of the early morn. Reginald felt humiliated past expression. He would

tain have repudiated the acquaintance, but had not the moral courage. His persecutor went on:

"Too early for the Saville, and I don't feel quite up to the Park. You know Ben Morgan's? good set use there. Oh, I forgot; you're not professional. Or, what say you to the 'Bedford Head'? Mostly authors, dramatic and newspaper, there—clever fellows, but not much gilt, except when they draw the publisher, and that's not so easy. You seem a little below par, as they say in the city, my good friend. Did you ever look in at the 'Harp'—the 'Old Harp'? Curious crib that. 'Poverty Ward,' 'Suicide Ward,' 'Lunatic Ward,' you can take your choice which you'll sit and take your drink in. Jolly chaps some of 'em, and don't care whose glass they drink out of—that's with permission."

During this one-sided conversation Dick Patter, for such was his stage name, had possessed himself of Reginald's arm, who, being actually at a loss how to kill time until the friendly shade of night should cover his return to Bayswater, suffered himself to be led eastward along the Grand Arcade, where his friend, who was the embodiment of brushed-up, revived, and sponged seediness in hat, coat, and unmentionables, lifted his shiny hat to somebody or other at every half-dozen paces, kissed the fingertips of his very much soiled gloves to a dozen promenading ladies whom he might or might not know, and stopped for a few seconds' converse with half a dozen se-dy-looking individuals of his own stamp, favouring Reginald as they parted from each with a few salient facts relating to the person he had addressed.

"That's Jinks. Clever fellow, but so awfully 'nuts' on himself there's no standing him. Out o' collar just now—his own fault. Wouldn't play seconds to—I forget. Was manager and master in his own house, I suppose. So out his name goes from the bills, and he won't see it there again, I'm thinking. Did you see that swell? He's took two theatres that don't pay, so he's just taken a third that's losing more than both of them put together. He swears they're all crowded every night, and those that don't go there believe him. Jolly smash up there'll be presently. No ghost walked, I'm told, last Saturday, and the artists are going on 'halves' next week—or nothing. Oh! here we are"—they had reached the corner of Little Russell Street. "That's the 'Albion,' but it's the 'Harp.' I want to show you. Excuse me, there's a new bill out at the Lane. Smith's a good fellow. Oh, Sam Phelps—Sir Pertinax Macynophant. Ever see old Macklin's comedy?"

Reginald replied that he had not.

"Egad, then you've a treat to come. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'm all right here with the box book-keeper, and the lessee himself for that matter, but I won't put myself under an obligation to him. I'll get passes, and you shall stand a steak and a frigidum sine at Simpson's. Is it a bargain?"

Reginald snatched at this release from a visit to the interior of the public-house, outside of which he had just been inspecting, with the frequenters of which Dick Patter had promised to make him acquainted.

"Certainly, my good friend," said Reginald, with forced politeness. "I should have been glad of your company to supper under any circumstances, but—"

"Oh, but me no buts, pal o' mine. It's just struck seven—here goes. Wait ten seconds and I'll be with you."

And Dick Patter made his way through the folding doors under the principal portico in Brydges Street and into the vestibule of the theatre.

He returned in less than half a minute.

"All right," said he, catching Reginald by the elbow. "You're an old friend of mine from Liverpool—professional, of course. I've two stalls, front row. This way."

As they passed the box-keeper's cheque place a nod was exchanged, and that official, having also passed a nod to the attendant who inspects and tears off the fells at the lobby entrance, called out:

"Two stalls—thirty-one and thirty-two. Mr. Patter and friend."

They passed in without any tickets, but as they went by the second official said to an attendant stall-keeper:

"Thirty-one and two, first row. Mr. Patter and friend. They'll shift seats if money comes in—you understand?"

"Of course I do, old fellow," interrupted Patter. "You needn't tell me. How's business?"

"Shy domus," responded the janitor, sotto voce.

"That's good, isn't it?" said Patter to Reginald, who was not a little annoyed, though amused at his friend's cool impertinence. "I mean 'shy domus' when the 'spirited lessee is nightly honoured with overflowing houses' and 'the free list is entirely suspended, the press excepted,' as you read in the

advertisements and bills. That's business though. Persuade the public and yourself, if you can, that you are successful, and it's two to one you do succeed."

The attendant indicated the seats and tendered a programme to Reginald, who received a gracious smile in return for an unexpected shilling. Mr. Patter's friends more frequently "dropping" a "little sixpence" and still oftener nothing, than the "splendid shilling" which Ambrose Phillips immortalises as procuring so many things, civility included.

Mr. Patter now explained, heedless of Reginald's marked expression of uneasiness:

"Capital seats; best in the house. Couldn't be better for high comedy, though too near for opera or spectacle. Good fellow that he is; always obliges professionals and press people. Hope 'Mr. Money' won't come in and shift us though."

Mr. Patter was again explanatory as to this potent personage, who, as he would have the numbered fells would of right exclude them.

"Plenty more seats though," resumed he; "and it's an early stall night, on account of Phelps. Steady lot, constant playgoers. Good boxes, to see high comedy, though it may be thin upstairs."

This and the like bald, disjointed chat, accompanied the brief interval before the raising of the curtain.

(To be continued.)

LOST AND FOUND.

WHEN Mary Abwell received the intelligence that an old uncle, dying, had made her heiress to one of the finest and most valuable estates in Australia, she and her young husband concluded to visit it. For Charles Abwell, though in comfortable circumstances in his native land, was yet only the second son of a nobleman, and as, at the time we write of, it was a disgrace for the son of a noble to engage in trade, and he had no fancy for the ministry or military, his proud, energetic nature felt a yearning to escape from the thralldom or lethargy forced upon it by birth, and seek a new country where no honourable employment of brain and hands would be considered a disgrace. His brave little wife sympathized with him in his yearning for a broader sphere of action, and so, with their household effects, they took passage for themselves and their little ten-year-old daughter Mima in a vessel bound for Sydney.

A single day, however, before the sailing of the vessel, and after they had taken leave of their friends, and gone aboard, a message came to Charles Abwell announcing the probable fatal illness of his father. The dying man pleaded with his son to come to him once again for a last farewell.

The grief-stricken son could not refuse. A hurried consultation was had between him and his wife, at which it was determined that the young wife and child should continue their journey to their new home, Mary's presence there being required at once, to properly secure to her the legacy from her uncle, while Charles should go to his father's bedside, receive his last blessing, and rejoin his family by the first vessel sailing thereafter.

The parting between these loving hearts, though it seemed to them their separation could only exist a few months at the most, was indeed a sad one.

Mary Abwell and little Mima had a prosperous voyage; they safely reached their new home, and were enchanted with it. And now the days passed to them in familiarizing themselves to their new, strange, happy lives, and picturing the delight of the loving husband and father when he came to them.

But he did not come. Instead of his own beloved form, there came intelligence that the vessel in which he took passage had been lost, with all on board. Ah, those were fearful days of agony that followed to the poor, weeping, widowed mother in her darkened chamber and to the little awe-stricken child, who realized that something awful had happened, but could not comprehend the nature of her loss.

"He will come to me; he is not drowned; his dear eyes will yet look into my own, or upon the mound marking my last resting-place," the poor, weeping wife would constantly repeat even when months of waiting and watching piled upon each other, forming years.

Mary Abwell realized that her own life could not be a long one, and through these sorrowful years her one joy was in training her child's mind and person to every sweet, virtuous trait, impressing upon her strength of purpose and self-reliance, that, when left alone in the world she would not be helpless.

Mima Abwell was in her twentieth year, a lovely girl noble, brave, and womanly, when her mother, feeling that her life's mission was done, went quietly to her eternal rest. Even in her last breath her

faith in the one inspiration of her life all these years have found its expression to her weeping child.

"Your father will come," she said; "watch for him, and tell him that I waited here as long as I could, hoping to meet him."

Her presentiment proved itself true.

The flowers planted by the loving hands of Mima over the mound that marked her mother's resting-place were blooming their first time when a foreign letter came to the faithful heart ever at rest. It devolved on Mima to open it.

How powerless are words to express her emotions, her bewilderment and her intense flood of joy, when these written lines revealed to her the knowledge that her father, mourned so long as dead, was alive, and would soon be with her. His letter revealed all that was mysterious in his long silence.

When the vessel that, more than ten years previous, was conveying Charles Abwell to Australia, to rejoin his wife and daughter, foundered in the great ocean, he clung to a floating spar, and for many fearful hours of thirst and hunger and suffering he was beaten about from wave to wave.

On the second day, when life seemed hopeless to him, and reason had almost deserted him, a vessel bore down upon him, and he was plucked out of the cruel waters, only to face a more cruel fate.

His rescuers were pirates, and in their stronghold he served as a slave for ten long years, each day being a succession of abuse and suffering more pitiless than death itself.

The hope of escape, the hope to once more clasp his wife and child to his bosom, gave him strength to live on, and deliverance came at last. His letter to his dead wife was dated from his native England, and it terminated with the glad intelligence that as soon as he had regained sufficient strength to undertake the sea voyage he would hasten to his wife and child.

It was a hard task to write the words that must add a great, life-long sorrow to the awful weight of woe this poor, frail, suffering man had borne. Amidst tears of love and sympathy, Mima revealed in tenderest words to him the death of her mother, telling him of her patient love and trust during all the waiting years, and of her last message for him. And then she told him how fondly she, as his daughter, loved him, and how much she needed his loving presence and counsel, begging him to hasten to her.

In due time an answer came from him, assuring her that she was the only dear link binding his heart to the earth now. He would hasten to her, that he might bestow upon her the fondest love of a father, and be near his wife's last resting-place. He would leave by the first vessel following that which carried the letter to her.

"It is more than ten years, Mima, since you last looked into your father's face. Do you think you will know him?"

The speaker was Caird Meredyth, a young man of twenty-five years, a son of a neighbour, and a dear friend and welcome visitor always to Mima Abwell, as he had also been to her mother during her life, although, after all, in a different way. For the sweet experience which rounds out and makes perfect in loveliness every woman's nature, the experience without which her life is a failure, had already come to Mima. She loved Caird Meredyth; he was worthy of her love, and returned it with a passion as strong and pure.

"Know my dear father!" she exclaimed, in astonishment at his query. "I could recognize him among a thousand, I feel certain."

"Then you must have a distinct recollection of his features as you saw them last, dear Mima. Please describe him to me, for am I not most interested in him, next to yourself?"

She looked bewildered; how could she describe him, when her only remembrances, being put to the test, was most vague and shadowy—the remembrance, simply, of a face of noble outline, of soft, tender eyes, filled with honesty and sincerity, and of a kind voice?

"His eyes will reveal him to me," she persisted: "then he will look so noble, so grand and self-reliant—so honourable, that I cannot mistake him. Surely, O-ird, there must exist such an intuitive sympathy between us that we will be irresistibly drawn to each other."

He sighed deeply as he answered:

"I hope you are correct, Mima, but I cannot be anything but miserable until I know him. Have you thought, darling, that he may refuse to ratify the gift that you have given me of yourself—that he may deny me the privilege of soon calling you my wife?"

Her arms clung in a moment round his neck on witnessing his distress, while she said, looking bravely into his eyes, for she loved too fondly and was too pure and innocent to be ashamed of showing her affection:

"My father will be too noble, Caird, to be guilty of anything that would make his child miserable. Besides, I know he will be proud of you, for no one who knows you can help feeling so."

His hand, laid tenderly over her mouth, stopped the utterance of all else that she would honestly have added in the same strain, but her loving words were not without their effect upon the young man. He parted from his betrothed reassured and happy.

And she retired to her chamber, and quietly thought over all that her lover had said, going to sleep after it happy and without fear.

Nothing could have been more startling than the information that awaited her on opening her eyes the following morning. Her father had arrived during the night, and was in the library now waiting for her. How she robbed herself, how she reached the threshold of that room holding her long-lost parent, she never could realize. There she stopped, clinging to the door for support, while she eagerly searched the face of the elderly man opposite her, who stood with his outstretched arms and eager face, welcoming her.

But from that face and figure her eyes wandered searchingly, unsatisfied, around the room, coming back to it again with an awful depth of disappointment in her face.

"No, no, you are not my dear father," she said. "Oh, where is my father? Has he not come? Have they been deceiving me?"

And, with heart-breaking sobs, she turned to fly from the room.

"Mima, my daughter," exclaimed the strange man, in sad reproach, "you deeply wound me by your conduct. Alas, have I, too, lost the love of my child? Have I been spared through so much suffering to feel the ungratefulness of the only object on earth I love? Cruel, cruel fate! why has life been preserved to me, that I may only curse it?"

He sank into a chair, and holding his face in his hands wept bitterly.

Mima hesitated but a moment longer, and then, springing to the side of the bowed form, wrapped her arms about it, exclaiming:

"Forgive me for my heartlessness. I did not mean to wound you, or ever give you cause to feel a sorrow. But it is all so sudden, I cannot think—I cannot understand. Tell me, I pray you, as you hope for peace hereafter, are you indeed my long-lost father? Oh, do not deceive me!"

The poor girl's pleadings would have touched the hardest heart, they were so pitiful.

He looked up reproachfully, his cheeks wet with tears.

"Alas, my daughter," he exclaimed, bitterly, "have you let the world usurp your mind so much as to wipe away from your memory all remembrance of my face? What stronger proof can you ask than that which may be found in my looks?"

"Forgive me," he added, hurriedly, wrapping his arms around her, as he saw the pain his words occasioned her; "I was too hasty in condemning you, forgetting how the suffering I have under gone must have changed my appearance. I have abundant proofs of my identity, dear child; but can you not recognise some familiar features in me?"

She long and searchingly into his face.

"It is like, and yet not like," she murmured, in a bewildered way.

Then, with an effort, she added:

"I may have been wilful, my father, but if you can forgive me, and bear with me, you will at least find me a dutiful daughter. I do not know my own mind—I am bewildered. I need time to think over all this—time to grow familiar with your appearance and your tastes—time to know you. Bear with me, I pray you, if it is for months that I ask it, and surely the love and devotion that I had thought were already in my heart will come back and be yours."

He pressed her shrinking form to his breast, and kissed her, saying:

"The suddenness of my arrival and your long expectation and anxiety have overcome you, my dear child. Go now to your room, and rest yourself."

She tottered rather than walked away. When within her own room she paced its floor for hours, pressing her throbbing temples, and trying to think, to reason, to understand. But ever before her, like a dreadful nightmare, was the memory of that face, like, yet so vastly unlike, that which she expected to see in her father. The contour of the face was in some respects similar to her ideal face, but, alas! there was no nobleness, no true bravery nor honesty, no gentleness nor forbearance in the small, cunning, deceptive eyes and the thin, cruel, scornful lips of that man who called himself her father.

Then, and many times in every succeeding day during the following month, Mima would flee from his presence, lock herself within her room, and throw herself down in the wild abandonment of grief, moaning:

"He is not my father! Oh, I cannot call him that!"

But quite as many times a day she censured herself, and wept bitter tears, over what she termed her wilfulness in not giving him without question, doubt or condition, the love of a daughter. Her life was indeed one of most pitiable misery divided as it was between desire, to do her duty, and a fearful horror of this man who claimed to be her father.

She might have learned in time to be more like a daughter to him, but for certain outcroppings of his character, which manifested themselves after he had been established as master of his new home a week. He was tyrannical and cruel to the servants, who had been used only to kindness from Mima and her mother. He was parsimonious, treacherous and dishonest in his dealings. He began to be overbearing and unkind to Mima, often speaking rudely to her, and when Caird Meredith paid his usual visits, he was so boorish and ungentlemanly in his treatment of him as to make it almost unbearable to that proud-spirited youth. It was only, however, after he learned that Mima's sense of duty to him as her father was so great as to overcome her own yearnings that he forbade her from encouraging the attentions of Caird, and treated her harshly.

This first month of life since the arrival of her parent was indeed a most sorrowful and bitter one to Mima.

Caird Meredith was in agony over the way matters were progressing. He realized every time he saw Mima's sad face—which was seldom now, for he had almost ceased his visits to her home—that he might escape constant insults from her father—that a few months more of such dreadful life to her would kill her.

Thinking it all over one evening, he determined to go over to Mima's home, knowing that her father would be absent on that evening, and attempt to induce her to become his wife at once, and thus secure his protection.

It was a lovely moonlit evening, and as he approached Mima's home he saw her on the verandah, and hastened his steps, feeling his heart beat faster and more joyfully as he approached the lovely girl. She did not see him: she seemed intent in thought, and he had planned how he would surprise her, when suddenly, and with a startled scream, she sprang from her seat.

Looking hastily to perceive the cause of her alarm, he saw that a man in sailor's costume had sprung from the shrubbery up the verandah steps, to within a step or two of Mima.

Before Caird could carry out his promise to spring upon him, thinking his intentions there not honest, the man spoke:

"Don't be afraid of me, Miss Mima," he began.

"What do you wish? I do not recognize you," Mima said, trembling with apprehension.

"Why, you see, miss, there's a poor old man lying over here, who is very ill, and if you'd just come over and talk with him, I know your sweet voice would do him good. When it bewitches young fellows out of their senses, it might bewitch sense into the old man. Oh, what's that?"

Caird had had his hand on the man's collar, and he showed every sign of terror and a strong desire to escape, until he learned that his captor did not belong to the Abwell household.

"Won't you go, miss?" he continued, pleadingly.

"Yes, I will, hoping I may be of use to the poor sufferer," the brave girl answered. "Caird, you will accompany us?"

The man in great delight hastened away, the lovers closely following. He led them to a lonely spot, on which stood a log hut, in which they found stretched upon a pallet, the emaciated form of a man. His thin worn face, and gray head and beard, were a sad enough spectacle, but when, awakening from a slumber by their entrance, and perceiving them, he sprang away in wildest terror from them, guarding himself behind the sailor, and pleading piteously with the faithful fellow not to let those strange people take him away or harm him, they realized that his ailment was a mental one—that his reason was affected.

What was there in that sad, crazed face that irresistibly drew Mima to it? A great love and pity welled up in her heart at once for this poor frail man: she could not have helped going to him, laying her electric fingers upon his hands, gently detaching them, and asking him to trust and love her. With a glad look of surprise the sufferer followed her to the pallet, murmuring, as if to himself:

"She is not one of my enemies; she will not harm

me. She is an old, old friend of mine. I recognize her now."

And then, while she smoothed his gray hairs with her magic touch, he prattled away to her in child-like, silly talk, and she answered him as if he were indeed a child.

Caird and the sailor left them thus, realizing that Mima alone with the invalid could soothe him as no medicine might do. When they returned, a half hour later, they found that gray head nestling trustingly on Mima's bosom, and those wild eyes closed in peaceful slumber. Already the suffering man was much better for Mima's ministrations.

Before they left the humble hut the sailor again impressed upon them, almost with terror in his voice, the importance to the suffering master and himself that Mima's father should not know of this mission of theirs nor of the refugees at the hut, lest they should fall under his wrath.

They promised to be silent.

Caird, though using all his eloquence, could not convince Mima that it would be right for her to disobey her parent, and without his consent become his wife.

"We will wait," she said with such a trusting confidence in their future that it conquered him. "Though years of separation should elapse, it cannot change our love, dear Caird, and our happiness then will be greater for having performed our duty to others."

But Caird found some joy. He met Mima frequently, for every day she stole away from her home down to the hut, there to spend an hour with the poor, stricken old man in it, and afterwards to walk home with her lover. She could not account for the irresistible way she was drawn to this strange old man. She was happier with him than with any other, except Caird: she clung to him with all the anxious intensity that a mother would to her stricken child—learning to eagerly watch every changing expression of his face, and anticipate every wish.

Mima's visits to the invalid were not fruitless. He grew to watch for them with painful eagerness, going into wild despair if from any reason she was delayed in reaching him. His eyes grew to be not so wild, his face not so sad, and his speech more sensible. Under Mima's soothing influence reason was attempting to again assert its throne. It was most pitiful at such times to witness the efforts of the poor, weak man to grasp some thread of memory that, however, when he felt sure of the victory, eluded him and left him in despair.

During one of these visits to the hut Mima proposed a walk, which the invalid gladly acceded to, leaning on Mima's arm and prattling away in great glee. The sailor and Caird led the way. How it came about none knew, but the party found themselves without premeditation at the burial-ground where rested Mima's mother and many others. The invalid began to read the words inscribed on the headstones that he passed, until he came to one more pretentious and tasteful than the rest, from which he read aloud:

MARY ABWELL,

AGED 42.

He started as he pronounced the name, clasped his hands over his temples, and repeated it slowly several times in a strange bewilderment. Then, as if light came to him suddenly, he fell prone upon the mound with a great moaning sob, and, wrapping his arms around the stone containing that name, wept as if his heart was breaking.

Mima stood powerless in amazement, Caird sprang forward to lift the prostrate form; but the sailor stopped him with serious meaning in his face. Thus they remained for several minutes, when the weeping man aroused himself, and arising slowly to his feet, looked vacantly upon the faces before him, recognized none until he encountered the sailor's eager, expectant gaze. Then, holding out his hand to the faithful fellow, he exclaimed, with the light of reason again in his eyes:

"I have had a long, dark, fearful dream, but the clouds are all gone at last. See, here is my poor dead wife. They tried to cheat me out of her grave even, but I have found it after a long, long search. Come, I am strong now, and we will go and search for my daughter, my poor little Mima."

Then Mima, who heard these mysterious words started and trembled violently, and then there suddenly came upon her an explanation of it all. She would have rushed into the strange man's arms, but Caird held her back, realizing the time had not come for that.

"How came I here?" the old man continued. "I thought I could remember it all, but the thread of memory is again slipping out of my grasp. Ha! I do remember all; my escape from among pirates, the intelligence of my wife's death, my departure to meet my daughter accompanied by you, my gallant

friend, who were on our arrival here to be my servant, and also by my fostermother, to whom I offered a home with myself and child, our pleasant voyage homeward, and then that fatal night when almost in sight of port. David Rose, my foster-brother, and myself were on deck alone. The night was dark, I was leaning over the taffrail, when, suddenly looking up, I saw David with a knife upraised to strike me. I was too late to save myself, the blow fell, I felt myself forced over into the water, and from that moment all the rest is a blank."

"I saw that awful deed," the faithful sailor eagerly added; "I dashed over into the water, got you up and got you ashore. I had heard you talk about the home of yours where your daughter was awaiting you, and I had you brought here, for I knew the way. But, ah! they were dark days that followed, for that wicked blow, though it didn't cut deep, seemed to have knocked all the sense out of you, and nobody could find it until a sweet angel came to you."

"A lovely girl, wasn't she, with kind, tender eyes, soft, soothing hands, and a voice like sweet music?" the old man gasped. "The memory of her seems like an enchanted dream to me. Can I not find her to bless her for restoring my reason to me? I will love her next to my own dear Mima."

The old sailor pointed to the real Mima. Already the old man's eyes had fastened upon her in bewilderment, in amazement, and then in a tremor of hope, of wild expectation.

The brave girl who had been so patient, who had borne so much in these minutes of startling disclosures, reached out her arms pleadingly, and, no longer restrained by Caird, murmured the word "Father!"

"My long-lost daughter! my own Mima!" he almost shrieked, realizing all the truth, and rushing to embrace her.

At last the real Charles Abwell had his daughter Mima clasped to his heart.

We need not dwell upon the happiness of these two long-separated ones in these first moments of their re-union, nor describe how proud they were of each other, and how full of genuine love were their hearts.

Any one looking into Charles Abwell's eyes now could see the evidence that again reason sat firmly enthroned over his mind.

It was only when those surrounding him were quite sure of this that they revealed to him the presence of a usurper in his and Mima's home. He knew this false person could be no other than his own foster-brother, who had attempted to murder him and believed him dead, and it was with a fierce purpose at his heart that he accompanied Mima and the others at once to her home.

But when Charles Abwell faced that cowardly impostor, and saw him cowering at his feet in most abject terror, pleading for his miserable life, he could not find it in his heart to visit the craven with the punishment he so richly deserved, so he spurned him from him, warning the treacherous man to for ever abandon his path. And he did!

A month after there was a happy wedding. Caird and his lovely wife made the home of Mima's father their abode also, and it was ever after a home of sunshine and gladness, indeed.

The faithful sailor had a warm corner in his home, for he was not forgotten or neglected by those he had helped to make so happy. His life was one of ease and comfort thereafter, and he had deserved it all.

A. W. R.

FANNY'S STRANGER.

"I TELL YOU, Fanny Shaw, you were made for each other!"

"And I tell you, Aunt Hildred, I would sooner die than marry him!"

"You are a stupid, Fanny! You are as headstrong and self-willed as your father was before you!"

"Please leave my relations entirely out of the discussion! I am my own mistress, twenty-one years old last June, and free to refuse the Emperor of Russia if I choose to! And I tell you, Aunt Hildred, once more, that I will not stay here to meet Earle Rochefort, to be inspected like a cow or a horse just up for sale! So there!"

And Fanny Shaw left the room, and shut the door behind her in a way which showed that she had a temper, as it was right and proper she should have. For a woman without a temper would be as insipid as broth without salt or pepper.

Aunt Hildred Ames put her smelling-salts to her nose and took a long sniff. Such contumacy in Niece Fanny she was sorely tried with. If she had dreamed that ever the girl would have developed so much obstinacy, she would have declined to become her guardian, even to please her dying brother.

A very few words will explain how matters stood.

Earle Rochefort was a young man of twenty-eight or thirty, a native of Mrs. Ames's own town, and a prime favourite with the good lady. According to her idea, there was not another man in all the world worth naming beside him.

His father had been Aunt Hildred's first love, but treachery on the part of somebody or other, it does not matter whom, had separated them; and he had found another woman, and Aunt Hildred had found another man.

But when Earle's father died an explanation had taken place, and Aunt Hildred had promised to love the son for the sake of the father.

And indeed she found it not very difficult to love Earle for his own sake, for he was gentle and affectionate, and won the regard of all with whom he came in contact.

But he did not marry, though a great many beautiful young girls would gladly have accepted him, so it happened that at eight-and-twenty he was still a bachelor; and about that time Aunt Hildred's brother, John, died in Madeira, and left his daughter Fanny to her aunt's care.

Fanny, pretty, spoiled, an heiress in her own right, and accustomed always to troops of servants to order about, did not fall readily into the groove her aunt had prepared for her. She made up her mind that she would not love and marry this Earle Rochefort, of whom she had heard so much.

As yet she had not met Mr. Rochefort. He was absent in Hungary, where he owned some mines, and had been there nearly a year perfecting some arrangements for their improved working. But he was expected home daily, and Aunt Hildred was continually agitating the subject nearest her heart. She had likewise written to Earle, over and over again, glowing descriptions of Fanny, and had dwelt largely upon her favourite plan of a union between her two children, as she called Earle and Fanny. Young Rochefort, with all a man's aversion to having a wife picked out for him, began also to fairly hate the name of Fanny, and to feel very much averse to meeting the paragon.

In fact, so strong did this feeling become that he decided not to go to Elmwood, Aunt Hildred's town, but to spend the winter in Derby.

He could make "business" an excuse; for, in addition to his other advantages, Rochefort was wealthy, and a man of property is always supposed to have plenty of business on hand. So he wrote to Mrs. Ames to that effect, promising to run down and see her some Saturday night, the very first opportunity.

Fanny, meanwhile, had packed a few dresses, and as little finery as it is possible for a young lady to exist with into a couple of trunks, and, in spite of Aunt Hildred's remonstrances, had departed to make a long visit to her Cousin Bentley's folks in Derby.

The very day of Fanny's departure Mrs. Ames received Earle's letter, and when she had read it, she executed a pas de seul which would have done credit to a French dancing master.

"Glorious!" she cried; "things couldn't have happened more to my liking! I'll write to Cousin Martha this very day, and get her on my side, and so, Miss Fanny, we shall see you Mrs. Earle Rochefort yet, in spite of yourself! For I know he will fall in love with you, if he meets you, and I don't believe you can help falling in love with him!"

Aunt Hildred capered around the room so gaily that the staid old cat fled under the sofa to recover her equanimity, and the very canary in the cage stopped his singing and contemplated his mistress in silent awe.

The letter to Cousin Martha was written, and despatched, and Aunt Hildred felt willing to await the course of events. She felt moderately sure that all would be as she wished it.

Fanny Shaw looked very pretty in her dark blue travelling attire, and her coquettish round hat, with its white feather, as she took her seat in the railway carriage the morning she began her journey to Derby.

More than one gentleman looked wisely at the unoccupied seat beside her, but she spread out her skirts in a way that lady travellers have, and put her muff on the cushions, and none of them were bold enough to ask her if the seat were engaged.

The carriage filled up rapidly, and presently a young man in a heavy travelling cloak paused beside her, and asked the question she had been expecting somebody would be impertinent enough to ask.

She had a great mind to tell him she preferred sitting alone, but he had taken up the muff and made himself comfortable before she had quite made up her mind to be so impolite. Then she looked at him, and was obliged to confess to herself that she had

never seen a finer face. His clear blue eyes, and blonde hair and moustache just suited Fanny's taste, for her own hair and eyes were black, and her lips and cheeks glowing like the heart of a cliff pomegranate. And, of course, she liked a blonde man best—indeed, how could she help it?

And he had such a grave, sweet voice, and he was so careful not to sit on her knees, and he did not twiddle with the tassels of her muff in the way most men do, but held it daintily, just as if he knew it was real Russian sable, and had cost a great deal of money.

They became very social, and talked of a great many things. They voted that they both liked the same authors, and this, of itself, is a wonderful strong bond of sympathy. By-and-bye they wandered to religion, and then to politics, and on both subjects their opinions agreed. After that it was plain sailing.

A furious snow storm set in, for the month was January, and the wind blew a gale from the north-east; but our young friends were so much occupied in getting acquainted that snow storms were of no account whatever.

After awhile it began to be very cold in the carriage.

Fanny began to feel very nervous. She wondered whatever she should have done without this gentleman who occupied the seat with her, and who wrapped his travelling shawl round her so carefully, and insisted on sitting next the window to keep off the cold draught of air.

Fanny thought that if only that Mr. Earle Rochefort, of whom Aunt Hildred prated so much, had been like this interesting stranger, how easily she could have stayed at Elmwood, and married him, and made Aunt Hildred happy.

The storm increased, the drifts became more and more formidable, and at last the engine gave a plunge forward, which shook everybody out of their seats, and demoralized things generally.

They were off the track, and no more progress could be made that night!

Fanny cried, and clung to her stranger, who did not appear a bit sorry that the accident had happened. He comforted the young girl, and drew her down on his shoulder to finish her crying, and took off her hat so that it would not be crushed (it was a Paris hat), and wound her soft white "cloud" over her curls and braids in such a delicate and skilful way.

Al, well, Fanny had lost her heart to him before the crash, and now she was completely subjected.

After all, it was a very delightful night. Fanny dozed a little, and her stranger sat beside her and kept her wrapped up.

But everything delightful must have an end, and in due time the train was put on the track, and Derby was reached.

The stranger put Fanny in a cab, and went with her to Cousin Bentley's and asked permission to call on her, and so they parted. He had not thought to ask her name, neither had she thought to ask his.

The next day Cousin Martha received Aunt Hildred's letter, and that evening, when Fanny's stranger called, oddly enough, Cousin Martha herself opened the door for him, and took his card. Then she showed him into the parlour, and followed him in and shut the door behind her, and stayed there talking with him full twenty minutes before she called Fanny.

The stranger was introduced as Mr. Fort, which Fanny thought a very singular name. But then, after all, "what's in a name?"

Of course they had a very delightful evening, which was but the beginning of a series of delightful evenings.

Mr. Fort's heart held out just a fortnight, and then he told his love in words too glowing for the cold point of our cynical pen to write, and the two young people did a very desperate thing—they engaged themselves, and set the wedding-day just one month ahead.

Fanny wrote her aunt a very graphic account of the whole affair, dwelling on Mr. Fort's kindness and devotion during the snow storm, and ending with saying that her lover was so far in advance of that odious Earle Rochefort in all the virtues and graces that she was sure Aunt Hildred would be delighted that her disobedient but ever-loving niece did not stay at home and marry that bear.

When Aunt Hildred read the letter she laughed till the tears came and dimmed her spectacles, and she hugged the cat, and shook hands with Betty the cook, and then proved herself a true woman, and in her right mind, by overhauling her wardrobe to see if she had any dress suitable to wear to the wedding.

Fanny came back to Elmwood just a week previous to this important event, and Mrs. Ames's house was turned upside down with the grand preparations.

Fanny declared she hoped that abominable Rochester wouldn't put in an appearance at the wedding, for she knew she couldn't be decently polite to him; and that Aunt Hildred would go off into such convulsions of laughter that Fanny began to look serious, for she was certainly afraid her aunt's brain was softening. So many brains did soften nowadays!

The wedding dress and veil were splendid, and Fanny looked like an angel in them. Just about five minutes before the time set in for the performance of the ceremony the bridegroom was announced.

But what was Fanny's amazement to see Aunt Hildred rush up to him, throw her arms around his neck, and call him her "dear Eric," and tell him how glad she was to see him back.

And then Aunt Hildred led him toward the bride, and, making a low obeisance, went through with the ceremony of an introduction.

"Miss Fanny Shaw, allow me to have the pleasure of presenting to you Earle Rochester, to whom you are about to be married!"

Fanny's black eyes blazed, and her little red mouth unclosed to say something spiteful, but Earle stopped it with a kiss, which is always an excellent way to stop a woman from scolding.

The wedding came off just as though nothing had happened, though everybody remarked that Fanny had a very high colour for a bride. Brides should always be pale, you know.

It proved a very happy union, though Fanny is wont to declare to Aunt Hildred that she never would have married that Earle Rochester if it had not been that she could not bear the thought of not using that "lovely dress and veil."

T. R.

AUNT DEBORAH'S ADVICE.

"WELL, well, Clara Manvers is to be married! And pray what is she going to do? She is a young creature, and knows nothing of household affairs. But children, nowadays, will do as they please, anyhow, and their over-anxious parents are afraid to have them taught anything. As for my part, I always thought Clara was a spoiled child; but I can tell her she will have to be brought out of it all some time."

Thus soliloquized good old Aunt Deborah as she sat knitting a pair of stockings, every now and then placing them in her lap to think of the news she had heard.

Now Aunt Deborah was as kind and as good-hearted an old soul as ever lived, but she was one of that sort (as all maiden aunts are) who thought that unless one could make a pudding or pie she must necessarily be a perfect "blue-stocking." She was not at all in favour of boarding-schools, for she always thought that girls learned more nonsense than anything else.

Aunt Deborah had arrived at quite a good old age; consequently had seen much of the world.

She really thought (as she often said) that the girls of the present day were the most giddy set she ever knew, for they thought of nothing else but beaux, forgetting at the same time that she had been disappointed in love, and had found as much pleasure in the company of the dapper beaux as any one. Just go to the little drawer which she keeps locked up, and you will find a few letters which she received in her "young days" that will convince you at once she used to write billet doux.

Dear, good creature, she has no confidence in them now, for they are but counterfeit, and every one she sees "the girls" reading she denounces severely.

But we have been saying so much about Aunt Deborah that we have almost forgotten Clara.

At the age of ten she was sent to a fashionable boarding-school to be educated. Now to this Aunt Deborah was strictly opposed, but her mother, being a very highly educated woman, saw the importance of her mind being properly cultivated, and well knew that it could never be accomplished at home.

Clara remained there until she had completed her eighteenth year, and then returned home. She was indeed a beautiful creature, and withal possessed all those airs which are peculiar to boarding-school girls.

She was ushered into society immediately after her arrival home, and became the belle of the season; she was admired and courted by all. Often she received a reproach from Aunt Deborah, who saw that she was totally enveloped with gaudy and fashion.

It seems that Clara could never agree with her aunt on any one point; consequently, when they met, their conversation was of a very opposite nature.

Aunt Deborah puts on her old-fashioned black bonnet and goes to see Clara. We will just stand behind the curtains a few minutes to hear the conversation.

Clara sits there, playing with her lapdog. Her good old aunt looks at her for a while in silence. But soon the slumbering volcano bursts, and aunt commences:

"Well, Clara, I hear you are to be married soon, and now, my child, take the advice of one who is your senior by a good many years. Now put the dog down and listen to me. Have you learned to make a pie yet?"

At this query Clara starts.

"Now pray tell me, Aunt Deborah, if you think that after I get married I am going to turn washerwoman, cook, and everything else?"

"Well, my child, I see all that you think about in visiting, chatting, beaux, and all those sort of things. Now, what are you going to do after you get married? It is, I believe, three months yet before you marry, so just set to work and learn to be domestic. You have all the accomplishments and the ornamental education, now seek to learn some of the useful branches; for I assure you that when you get married, you must not only be a paragon companion for your husband, but his housewife. Now, my child, I must go, for I have some stockings to finish knitting; the winter is coming on, and I must prepare for it, being very rheumatic. Good-bye, my child; attend to my injunctions, and I know you will never regret so doing."

"Well, well, I wonder what put it in Aunt Deborah's head to come round here this morning and give me a certain lecture," said Clara Manvers. "It is a great wonder she did not ask who I was going to marry; but I suppose she knows. I should not be much surprised if she were to lecture Carlos, too. I do wonder how he would take it; laugh in his sleeve, I warrant. I know Aunt Deborah means well, but then she judges me too harshly, and, besides, I have plenty of time to learn."

We will pass over the space of about three months, during which time many preparations were made for the wedding. Among the number of invited, Aunt Deborah, of course, was not forgotten.

On receiving the invitation, Aunt Deborah exclaimed:

"Why, bless my heart, the child is to be married next Thursday! let me see, it's only a week off. A short time indeed, and she shook her head. "I will go and see if she has taken my advice: I will wager she has not heeded a word."

"There, now, I knew aunt would be here to-day," said Clara, as she heard her infirm tread upon the steps. "Marry, tell her to come in my room; I will prepare myself for a good lecture."

Just as expected! After the usual greetings, Aunt Deborah commenced questioning her, but found that her advice had been cast upon the desert air.

"Depend upon it, my child," said her aunt (putting on her spectacles to take a view of the superb dresses which were scattered about the room) "this will never do."

Clara said not a word, neither was she vexed, for Aunt Deborah was so good-natured that no one could get angry with her.

After a prolonged visit, during the time making many observations (for she was a close observer), she left Clara, stating that she would certainly be at the wedding on the following Thursday.

"I do wonder when Aunt Deborah will finish lecturing me. Never, I suppose. But I will show her that I can do anything I wish to, when the time comes; I am not quite such a 'blue-stocking' as she supposes I am," said Clara.

Thursday came. All was being put in readiness for the wedding. Clara certainly looked more bewitching than ever. Everyone was exclaiming, "How charming! how beautiful!" Even Aunt Deborah had to say, contrary to her wishes (for she was afraid of making her vain), that she looked "mighty pretty," but then, she added, "she can't make a pie or pudding!"

Six months have elapsed since Clara was married. Carlos Wareham, a merchant engaged in a pretty extensive business, was compelled to leave town for a short time. He regretted it exceedingly, for so much attached was he to Clara that every moment he was out of her presence seemed a year. He came home one day and told Clara that he must leave town in three weeks, and desired that she should have all things put in readiness.

Now here her troubles commenced; the seamstress who had always been sewing for her was out of town; the rest were so much engaged that she could get no one to sew for her. Now, there was no alternative but to do it herself. What in the world was she to do? She never in her life had done anything of the kind. Now her bright eyes were bedewed with tears, and in a "pretty pet," which is

sometimes so becoming, she throws the linen and the scissors on the floor. In spite of her pride, she had to send for Aunt Deborah.

The old lady was sitting knitting (as usual) when the servant came. She was both delighted and surprised that Clara should send for her, and made all haste to go to her.

"Why, Aunt Deborah, Carlos is going away in a few weeks, and there are lots of clothes to make, and you know I have always had a seamstress; but at present she is out of town, so I had to try myself. Ma has gone away, so I have no one to show me unless you will be kind enough to do so."

"Don't you remember what I told you, Clara, before you were married? Have not my words come true? I will show you how to do anything, and will be most happy in the undertaking."

After cutting out and fitting the work, Aunt Deborah gave it to Clara, saying that she must do it herself, or she would never learn. She left Clara, telling her at the same time that when she needed her services she must not for a moment hesitate in sending for her.

"I must really acknowledge, after all, that what Aunt Deborah told me was true, and had I heeded it I would never have regretted it. But I hope this is the only trouble I shall have to surmount."

Ah! Clara was much mistaken, for very often she had to send for Aunt Deborah.

One day, shortly after the return of Carlos, several gentlemen were invited there to dine. Clara knew exactly how everything ought to be, and when a table was tastefully arranged, but did not understand how to get about it herself. Her pastrycook had been taken suddenly ill; and what in the world was she to do? Here was trouble, sure enough.

After spending some time in quest of some one she at last had to stop at Aunt Deborah's door.

Clara explained all to the good old lady, who very kindly offered to assist her.

"You see, my child," said Aunt Deborah, "how necessary it is for one to know how to do everything; and had you taken my advice in time it would have saved you so much trouble. But we must hurry, for it is getting late, and everything is to be arranged."

But these were not half the troubles that Clara had to encounter in consequence of her ignorance of household duties. She no longer thought it unnecessary to know how to do everything, and very plainly saw that the useful education was as requisite as the ornamental. She found that, in order to be a happy wife she must have a knowledge of "household goods," and that a young lady's education is not complete until she is versed in everything relative to domestic affairs.

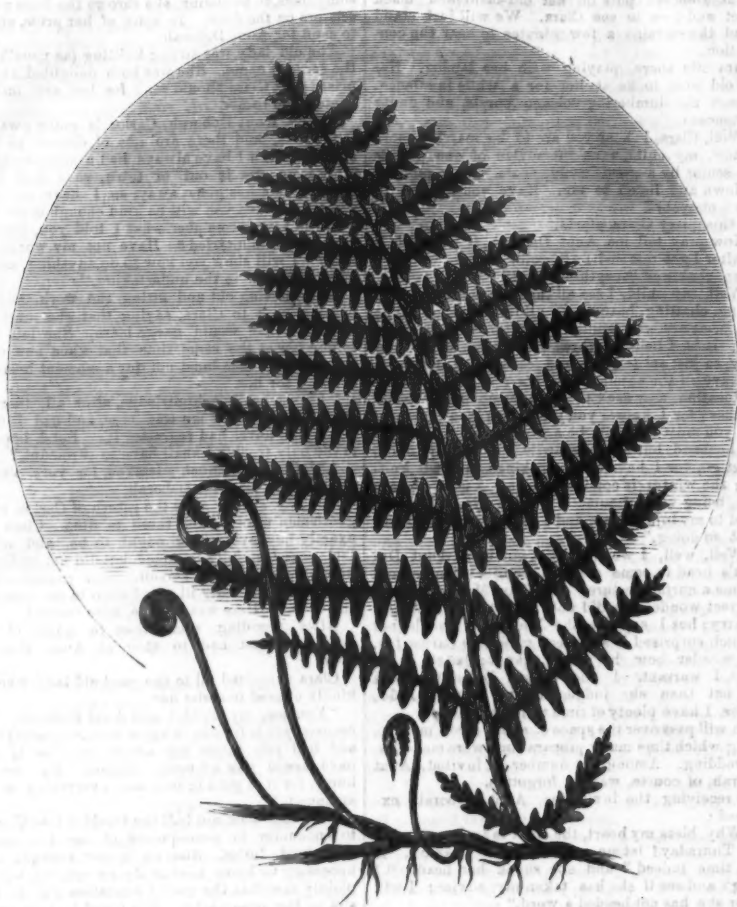
In a word, Clara found that Aunt Deborah's advice would have saved her much trouble had she taken it in time. Under the instruction of her good aunt, which she now gladly accepted, she improved daily. Carlos saw how industrious Clara had become of late, and felt as if he could never thank Aunt Deborah enough for thus instructing his young and beautiful wife in those duties which render home an Eden.

M. H. B.

EATING BETWEEN MEALS.—If a person eats between meals, the process of digestion of the food already in the stomach is arrested, until the last which has been eaten is brought into the condition of the former meal, just as if water is boiling and ice is put in, the whole ceases to boil until the ice has been melted and brought to the boiling point, and the whole boils together.

THE DISTINGUISHING MARKS OF A LADY.—I frankly own that my idea of a lady is of a woman who so thoroughly carries out her well-considered notions of what is right for her to do, both in great and little things, that she does not merely copy "the general crowd, the common fool," but that it is simply impossible for her to appear to be anything but what she is. As long as there is no pretence there is no vulgarity; the absence of pretence marks the lady in the same way that the presence of kindness shows the woman.—F. R.

Enjoy the present, whatever it may be, and be not solicitous for the future; for if you take your foot from the present standing and thrust it forward to to-morrow's event you are in a restless condition; it is like refusing to quench your thirst by fearing you will want to drink next day. If to-morrow you should want, your sorrow would come time enough, though you do not hasten it, let your trouble tarry till its own day comes. Enjoy the blessings of this day, if God sends them, and the evils of it bear patiently and sweetly, for this day is ours. We are dead to yesterday and not yet born to to-morrow.



[FEN.]

FLOWERS: THEIR LANGUAGE, SENTIMENT, SYMBOLS AND INTERPRETATION.

BY PHILANTHOS.

VOCABULARY.

EVERFLOWERING CANDYTUFT. Indifference.—See Candytuft.

EVERGREEN CLEMATIS. Poverty.—See Clematis.

EVERGREEN THORN. (Achusa sempervirens.) Solace in Adversity.

As none of the books give the least hint as to what they mean by Evergreen Thorn, and as the very pretty and bristly blue Alkanet finds no place in the vocabulary, I have chosen it for "Solace in Adversity."

It is a stout plant, about two feet high, with stalks beset with bristles. It has leaves of a rich deep green, and in May and June is bright with large bright blue saucer-shaped flowers. It is found in Yorkshire and Devonshire, in hedges, among brick-rubbish and by the roadside.

The Common Alkanet is known as furnishing a rich dye, used by chemists in colouring lip-salves, wax, etc., and the blood of St. Januarius, annually liquified at Naples, is tinged with the juice of this plant. Beckmann says: A solution of spermaceti in sulphurous ether, tinged with Alkanet-root, which solidifies at 50 degrees, but will melt and boil with the heat of the hand, it is supposed to be the substance which is used at Naples when the blood of St. Januarius melts spontaneously, and boils over the vessel which contains it.

EVERLASTING. (Gnaphalium Sylvaticum.) Never-ceasing Remembrance.—See Cudweed.

EVERLASTING PEA. (Lathyrus latifolius.) Enduring Pleasure.

This handsome offspring of some of the many varieties that flower wild adorns the cottage porch and summer arbour with its stout broad stems, innumerable leaves and profusion of pink and purple flowers. As an emblem of Enduring Pleasure it is well chosen, for all who knew it bear testimony to the certainty with which its stout shoots reappear in early spring and its readiness to adapt itself to any aspect and almost any confinement of air and situation, while flowering to the last.

EYEBRIGHT. EUPHRASY. Gladness.

This elegant little plant, which in rich soil assumes the habit of a small shrub, in its wild state bearing numerous white, lilac or purplish flowers occasionally variegated with yellow, is to us well suited as a symbol of Gladness. Its Greek name, "Euphrosyne," the nymph of joy and pleasure, strengthens its claim. The vocabularies, however, give myrrh as the type of Gladness, which we shall also retain. There may be confusion in giving different significations to one flower, but little harm is done by giving more than one flower to a single signification. It grows commonly on hills, in meadows, heaths and chalky cliffs near the sea.

Euphrasy, which is slightly bitter and astringent, was formerly famous as a remedy for ophthalmia and cataract, or gutta serena.

Old Nicholas Cuipeper says: "If the herb was but as much used as it is neglected, it would half spoil the spectacle-makers' trade; indeed a man would think that reason should teach people to prefer their natural before artificial spectacles, which, that they may be instructed how to do, take the virtues of Eyebright as forthwith: The juice or distilled water of the plant taken at noonday in white wine or broth, and dropped into the eyes for several days together. Helpeth all infirmities of the eyes which do cause dimness of the sight. A conserve of the flowers hath the same effect. Being used also in any of these ways it also helpeth a weak brain or memory. Also mixed with strong beer and drunk, or powdered and made into an electuary with sugar, it serveth to restore the eyes decayed through old

age, and Amaldus de Villa Nova sayeth it hath restored eyesight to those who have been blind a long time before."

Gerarde, Brook and others bear like testimony, and the last-named says that, according to Hildanus and Lanzoneas (authorities with whom I cannot pretend the slightest acquaintance) men at the age of seventy and eighty years recovered almost from entire blindness from its use. Wherefore old people need not despair.

Milton has immortalized this virtue of the Eyebright under its classic alias of Euphrasy, where he introduces the Archangel Michael as showing the future history of man after the fall of our first parents:

But to nobler sights
Michael from Adam's eyes the film removed,
Which that false fruit that promised dearer sight
Had bred; then purged with Euphrasy and rue
The visual nerve, for he had much to see.

Par. Lost, b. xi., l. 415.

Spenser, long before, sang its virtues:

Yet Euphrasy may not be left unsung.
That giveth to dim eyes to wander leagues
around.

The poet of "The Seasons," too, thus invokes his muse:

If she whom I implore, Urania, deign
With Euphrasy to purge away the mists
Which, humid, dim the mirror of the mind.

The name runs through most European languages. The Euphrasy of the French and Euphrasio of the Italians is not found, however, in the index to Charlotte de la Tour's volume; the Oxalis (Wood Sorrel) appearing as the symbol of Joy, as it also does in the American Flower books and Tyas.

FENNEL. (Anethum foniculum.) Strength. Worth—all Praise (American Vocabulary). Force (French Vocabulary).

This odorous plant, with its warm and aromatic seeds, in its wild state, on chalky soils and cultivated in the kitchen garden, is too well known to ask a minute description.

The ancients attributed wonderful qualities to the fresh Fennel and also to its dried seeds, but the modern Pharmacopœia has sadly reduced its importance. The seeds (Anethi semina), as furnishing "Dill-water," we are told have an aromatic odour and warm taste, qualities residing in an essential oil, which may be extracted by digestion with alcohol or distillation with water. Simple infusion with boiling water of the bruised seeds will extract their flavour. A simple carminative."

Dioscorides and Pliny tell us that it is of wondrous efficacy. Boiled in wine the seeds will relieve those who have eaten poisonous fungi or been bitten by serpents. "These (the serpents) have won it much credit, and brought it (Fennel) into much fame in this regard, namely, that by tasting thereof they do cast their old skin, and by the juice that it yieldeth do clear their eyes; whereby we also are come to know that this herbe hath a singular proportion to purifie our sight and to take away the filme or web, that overruleth and dimmeth our eyesight," all which, though set forth in an old translation as the words of Pliny, is as solemn bosh as ever was strung together.

Another authority tells us that "boiled in milk the root is comforting and carminative, and doth cure the jaundice, gout, and cramps in the limbs. The roots doth check and prevent pinguedo (we commend this to the notice of Mr. Banting and his followers) and the thick stalks may be eaten by such as desire not to be corpulent."

As a symbol of Strength it is classically appropriate. The gladiators, we are told, when training for public displays, ate Fennel to give them strength and restore expended energy. Then again, the victorious wrestler was crowned with Fennel-leaves (some authors say celery), when the sports were concluded.

The American poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, certainly one of the most scholarly and best-read bards of modern times, has some exquisite lines in a little poem called "The Goblet of Life," in which the Fennel is most effectively introduced. Here are the stanzas:—

THE GOBLET OF LIFE.

This goblet, wrought with curious art,
Is filled with waters that upstart
When the deep fountains of the heart,
By strong convulsions rent apart,
Are running all to waste.

And as it mantling passes round,
With fennel it is wreathed and crowned,
Whose seed and foliage, sun-embrowned,
Are in its waters steeped and drowned,
And give a bitter taste.

Above the lowly plants it towers,
The Fennel, with its yellow flowers,
And in an earlier age than ours
Was gifted with the wondrous powers
Lost vision to restore.

It gave new strength and fearless mood
And gladiators, fierce and rude,
Mingled it in their daily food;
And he, who battled and subdued
A wreath of Fennel wore.

Then in Life's goblet freely press
The leaves that give it bitterness,
Nor prize the coloured waters less,
For in thy darkness and distress
New light and strength they give.

O, suffering sad humanity,
O, ye afflicted ones, who lie
Steeped to the lips in misery,
Longing and yet afraid to die,
Patient though surely tried,

I pledge you in this cup of grief
Where floats the Fennel's bitter leaf;
The battle of our life is brief.
The alarm—the struggle—the relief,
Then sleep we, side by side.

So much for the classics. In our own country its renown as a fish sauce is of very old date: our ancestors using it much more liberally in their cookery than the moderns. Parkinson in 1629, in the supplement to his "Garden of Flowers," enumerates "Fennel" as one of the herbs "fit to be planted in gardens for the use of the familie," and I quite agree with him, though it is sadly given to self-sowing and spreading, weed-like, where it is not wanted.

There is nothing nicer to our taste than a good thick Fennel-sauce with boiled mackerel; and with pickled salmon fresh Fennel, at other times somewhat, as our old writers would say, "gravelent," is positively fragrant, and a "nip" of it is a fine corrective of acidity.

As to old Parkinson, he says, and here also I agree with him, "it is useful to strowe upon fysh, as also to boyle put among fysh of divers sorte, Cowcumbers and other fruits are pickled therewith, and the seeds much used in pippin pies and divers baked fruits, as also in bread to give it a better relish."

Fennel (we have already quoted Longfellow) is by no means unnoticed by the poets. Shakespeare introduces it humorously in "Henry the Fourth" in the scene where the disguised Prince Henry and Foins overhear Falstaff's abuse of themselves and their doings. Doll asks "Why does the prince love him so then?" To which the fat knight facetiously replies: "Because their legs are both of a bignesse; and he (Foins) plays quoits well; and eats conger and Fennel; and drinks off candle-ends for flap-dragons; and rides the wild mare with the boys, and jumps upon joint-stools; and wears his boot very smooth, like unto the sign of the leg; and such other gambol-facilities he hath that show a weak mind and unable body, for which the prince admires him; for the prince himself is such another—the weight of a hair will turn the scales between their avoidpouls."

From which I gather that conger, most probably pickled modern salmon-fashion, was eaten by hard drinkers, with Fennel as a breath-sweetener and corrective in houses of entertainment in the Elizabethan time; for Shakespeare in these things is delightfully and purposely anachronistic.

Mem: I mean this gloss for the benefit of any of the thousand and one annotators and obscurers of Shakespeare yet to come who may please to adopt it: most of the past are beyond help.

Shakespeare's other allusion would seem to imply that Fennel was a "nosegay flower." Ophelia says:—

"There's Fennel for you, and columbines: there's rue for you: and here's some for me: we may call it herb o' grace o' Sundays: you may wear your rue with a difference."

As we are in the annotating mood, we may observe that this speech is evidently addressed to her brother, Laertes. If, however, we wanted proof that Fennel was a favourite perfume, Milton would supply it. The "prince of poets" places it, indeed, in a high place:—

A savoury odour blown more pleased my sense
Than sweetest Fennel.

Drayton, who was fond of cataloguing places persons, and things in his rambling rhymes, mentions Fennel as a "strewing" herb for a newly made bride.

Thy hot muscado then, with milder maudlin cast,
Strong tansey, Fennel cool, they prodigally waste,
Clear hyssop and therewith the comfortable thyme,
Germander with the rest, each one then in their prime.

The maudlin here mentioned is the "maudlin, or

moon daisy" or oxeye (see *Chrysanthemum*, ante), and the muscado the marsh-crowfoot, bulbous fumitory, or adoxe (see *Fumitory*). To all this we may add that the Fennel-seeds of commerce are mostly imported from France, where its cultivation for commercial purposes is extensive. The next item in our alphabet is not a Fennel at all, but falls of necessity under the letter F.

FENNEL FLOWER. (*Nigella Damascena*.) GARDEN FENNEL FLOWER; or, LOVE-IN-A-MIST. Doubt. Uncertainty. Embarrassment.

On the authority of Mrs. Loudon's handsome quarto (see p. 9, Article *Nigella*), we have introduced the Fennel Flower, and figured it as the emblem of Embarrassment, Uncertainty, or Doubt. We do this the more readily, as the apricot blossom (see *Apricot*, ante) is so short a time procurable, while *Nigella* (known from the time of Gerard as *Melanthium*, Bishop's-wort, Devil-in-a-Bush, Love-in-a-Mist, Love-in-a-Puzzle, and St. Katherine's Wheel) seems indicated, by its popular names, as an appropriate symbol.

All the species are remarkable for the feathery lightness of their leaves and their very ornamental capsules. The *N. Damascena* grows about a foot high, with many Fennel-like leaves, and a very pale, solitary, blue flower at the extremity of each shoot. The pale blue petals which constitute the ornamental part of the flower are in fact leaves (sepals), or outer coverings of the real petals, which are themselves rolled up into little bags, called nectaries by the botanists, from their secreting honey. Then there are seed-vessels (carpels) forming a very pretty capsule, to which the seeds adhere slightly, like peas in a pod. When ripe these carpels burst open at the top and discharge the seeds. These seeds, which are aromatic and peppery, are not poisonous, as reported. The capsules, when the flowers have dropped, are so elegant in their base-like form as to be ornamental in their way as the flowers.

There are white, single, and double, and other varieties of the *Damascena*, or Roman Fennel Flower, as it is sometimes called. Its name, *Nigella Romana*, is derived from its being a common corn flower in Italy, though it is said to have been brought from Damascus in 1570. It was probably here even before that, for in Tassus's "Five Hundred Good Points in Husbandry," 1572, which includes directions for gardening, *Nigella Romana* is named among the "flower seeds to be sown in March," which could hardly have been the case if it had been known here only two years.

The name *Nigella* is supposed to have been derived from the blackness of the seeds; but in "The Retired Gardener," by Loudon and Wise, there is a legend of a wicked nymph, called *Nigella*, who was changed into this flower on account of the blackness of her heart. We may note that the old name, Devil-in-a-Bush, in some old books, is derived from the singular appearance of its horned seed-cases peeping through its bushy leaves; Love-in-a-Mist, from its pale blue flowers being surrounded so completely by the leaves, and blue being the colour of love; Love-in-a-Puzzle, from almost the same reasons; St. Katherine's Wheel, from the wheel-like shape of the fully-expanded flower; and Garden Fennel Flower (which seems the best name), from its leaves being so like Fennel. The name of Bishop's wort was derived from its projecting styles rising above the flower bearing resemblance to a crozier; and lastly, Gerard's name of *Melanthium*, from the Greek word, *Melania*, blackness, from its black seeds. Gerard speaks of its medicinal virtues as a stimulant, and says it is mentioned both by Hippocrates and Galen.

Other varieties are *Nigella Nana*, or Dwarf *Nigella*; *Nigella Hispanica* (Large Spanish *Nigella*), the most beautiful species of the whole genus; *Nigella Orientalis* (Yellow-flowered *Nigella*); and half a dozen others.

The cultivation of this plant is simple. It may be sown in the same manner as *flos Adonis*. Its compact bushy shape and erect stem render pruning and training unnecessary, but thinning is essential, as if the plants are too thick they will be drawn up with poor naked stems. Sow the seeds in March, but if wanted particularly early sow in autumn, and they will stand safely through the winter. When the common blue, dark blue, and white Spanish *Nigella* are combined, as we have seen them, in the same group, a splendid contrast is produced. The ordinary sorts may be had at the seed shops.

FERN. Fascination. Magic. Sincerity (Tyas).

I cannot compliment the compilers of flower-language who have gone before me for discrimination or perspicuity. We have more than one volume solely devoted to British Ferns alone, yet the single word "Fern" is thought sufficient to cover such widely different meanings as Magic and Sincerity.

A popular description of a Fern would be a large leaf, or rather a bunch (frond) of leaves, which bears no flowers or seeds. But this would be incorrect, as we have the *Osmunda* or Flowering Fern, and the leaf is not a leaf, being called by botanists, what it really is, a frond (or branch), and certainly bearing the seeds of the plant on its under side. To disentangle a little of this involvement of Emblems, I shall take any one of the Filices, or Common Ferns, to mean Fascination or Magic, the *Osmunda Regalis* (see *Osmunda*) Dreams, and refer Sincerity (as in other vocabularies) to the Garden Chervil, under letter G.

The British species of the Fern family (Filices) may be taken for my purpose, as the Brake, Shield-fern (several varieties), Polypody, Maiden-hair, Spleenwort, Hart's-tongue, Lady's Fern, Horsetail, Adder's Tongue, and *Osmunda*. In the antediluvian world and among geologists gigantic Tree Ferns seem almost the only vegetation:—

Winding through palmy Ferns and rushes fenny,
And Ivy banks: leading full pleasantly
To a wide lawn, whence only one can see
Stems thronging around, between the swell
Of turf and slanting branches: who can tell
The freshness of the space of heaven above,
Hedged round with dark tree-tops?

The common Brake Fern is not only abundant but extremely useful. In the north it thatches houses, is a good litter for cattle, and its ashes are used in the manufacture of soap and glass. Its astringency and odour have adapted it for dressing and perfuming kid and chamois leather, and Miss Pirie tells us that in Scotland it is employed as a worm medicine. Seeds of the Common Brake, as well as those of other Ferns, afford interesting objects for the microscope.

The capsules which contain the seed, though to the naked eye appearing merely as dots or lines on the under surface of the frond, are either close-sitting or sessile, or elevated on little footstalks, surrounded by an elastic or jointed ring, opening across when ripe and discharging the seeds—not merely allowing them to fall upon the ground, but, by aid of the springing ring or cord, jerking them to a considerable distance.

During the months of September and October this curious piece of mechanism effects its destined purpose and sows a crop for the coming year. The root of the ordinary Brake Fern presents a natural hieroglyphic, which in different specimens represents more or less distinctly an oak tree or spread-eagle. This was adopted by the Royalists after Worcester and declared to represent mystically King Charles in the Boscobel oak. Linnaeus tells us that cutting one of the stems of a Brake Fern a little below the earth he found a kind of minute pencilling of the imperial eagle, and he gave it the name of *pteria aquilina*, and this has been its scientific title. The birthplace of the Bracken is the favourite haunt of the deer:—

The wild buck bells from the Ferny brake,
and the Fern, though ornamenting our pleasure grounds, is most essentially a wild plant. As the poet sings:—

Beautiful Fern!

Thy place is not where art exults to raise the tended flower,
By terraced walk, or decked parterre, or fenced and sheltered bower,
Nor where the straitly-levell'd paths, through tangled boughs between,
The sunbeam lights the velvet sward, and streams through alleys green.
Thy dwelling is the desert heath, the wood, the haunted dell;
And where the wild deer stoops to drink, beside the crystal well;
And by the lake, with trembling stars bestrid, when earth is still,
And midnight's melancholy pomp is on the distant hill.

The MAIDEN-HAIR (*Adiantum capilla Veneris*), for which see Maiden-hair under M, is one of the prettiest of our British ferns. The Hart's Tongue (*Scelopendrium vulgare*), and Lady Fern (spleenwort) and Blunt Shield Fern (Male Fern), have not been suited with emblems, and we shall not complicate the list by assigning them significations. Of the Lady Fern it is written:—

Where the copsewood is greenest,
Where the fountain gleams sheenest,
Where the morning dew lies longest,
There the Lady Fern grows strongest.

The attributes of Magic and Fascination (in an evil sense), seem to have a countenance in the cryptogamic (hidden marriage) character of the Ferns. There is a mystery in their propagation, growth and structure which early attracted attention. The uni-

versal poet speaks (1 Henry IV., a. 2, sc. 1) of the magic of Fern seed. Gadshill says, speaking of the good company he rode in, "We steal as on a castle, cook-sure: we have the receipt of Fern seed; we walk invisible." To which the Chamberlain replies in matter of fact sort, "I say, by my faith, I think you are more beholden to the night than to Fern seed for your walking unseen."

There are numerous allusions to the "mystic Fern" in old writers. Pliny says "there are two kinds of Fern; they have neither flower nor seed." Ben Jonson says:—

I had no medicine, sir, to walk invisible:
No Fern seed in my pocket.

And we read in Beaumont and Fletcher.—

—Hadst thou King Gyges' ring,
Or the herb that gives invisibility?

Yet for all this the Ferns have seeds, and these most common the Brackens, are reckoned to disperse millions in the summer air in form of a thin mist or vapour. As to the Adder's Tongue (Ophioglossum) common in our meadows, the old professors of magic extolled its powers, its "moon shape" signifying its wondrous potency. Colts tells us "that it is said, yea, and believed by many, that Moonwort will open the lockes wherewith a dwelling-house is made fast, if it be put in the keyhole, and also that it will loosen the lock, fetters and shoes from horses that go on the places where it groweth, and of this opinion was Master Culpepper, who, though he railed against superstition in others, had enough of it himself, as doth appear by his story of the Earle of Essex, his horses, which being drawn up in a bodie, did many of them lose their shoes upon White Down, neere Tiverton, in Devonshire, because Moonwort grows upon the heathes there."

Yet in those times there were intellects which emancipated themselves from these puerile absurdities. Gerard speaks of the alchemists who used this herb, calling it Martagon, from its supposed affinity to Mars—mars, steel—and says its magical powers are "more drowle dreams and illusions," and old Dr. Turner, in the "British Physician," declares the plant is "neither smith, farrier, or picklock." Wilkins, the poet laureate of the First George, and one of the heroes of Pope's "Dunciad," avails himself of a poet's license, putting it with a "some say":

There is an herbe, some say, whose virtues
such,
It in the pasture, only with a touch,
Unshoes the new-shod steed.

I have an idea, however, that by Moonwort is meant the Borychium Innaria, and not the Adder's Tongue—a matter of more curiosity than consequence.

The beauty of Ferns generally, as one of the graceful forms of life with which the earth is carpeted, cannot fail to strike the lover of Nature. When the glorious sun glows too ardently for the open, then, screened beneath the leafy canopy of the grand oaks, elms, beeches or maple, what is more lovely than a fringed carpet of Ferns?

The foxglove and the Fern, how gracefully they
grow,
With grand old oaks above them and wavy grass
below;
The stately trees stand round, like columns fair
and high,
And the spreading branches bear a glorious
canopy
Of leaves, that rustling wave in the whispering
summer air,
And gaily greet the sunbeams that are brightly
falling there.

Exactly so; and here PHILANTHOS will give his young students a bit of experience. Experts crede. Such a place as this—a Ferny glade—so canopied and with such weather, is the time to make one of a jolly pic-nic party; then is the time for a savoury pie, salad, cold-cup, and, where one's means will afford it, some still hock and sparkling champagne, pâte-de-foies-gras, plovers' eggs, and all the agréments of Fortnum and Mason's hamper; then, too, is the time for a declaration, for popping the question, renewing troth-plights and all that sort of thing. The time is surely more propitious in such a climate as ours than moonlight, a nightingale-haunted grove, or a damp riverside.

Come where the aspen quivers,
Down by the flowing river,
Bring your guitar, bring your guitar,
sings the bard who writes for the music shops.
Meet me by moonlight alone,
And then I will tell you a tale,
Must to be told by the moonlight alone.
wrote our old friend Augustine Wade in a tavern near St. Clement's Church and the office of the "Illustrated London News" in fact, don't make love

if you can help it in any of those generally uncomfortable places which our bards and romance-writers have borrowed the idea of from Italy, France, Spain or the sunny south. At such a time as we have described the Magic Fern is in its true witchery, and then you may call the attention of your intended to one of those beautiful objects and repeat or read to her what a lady poet says about it:

The green and graceful Fern, how beautiful it is!
There's not a leaf in all the land so beautiful
I wis.

Have you watched that ball unfolding each
closely-nesting curl,
And its fair and feathery leaflets their spreading
forms unfurl?

Oh! then gracefully they wave in the forest, like a
sea,
And dear as they are beautiful are these Fern
leaves to me.

Of course, if the lady has any taste, she will admire the lines, and thence it is an easy step to admiring the reading, but the most important point of all is that she should admire the reader—which I hope she will, especially if he (or she, for I write for both sexes) should be a subscriber to the LONDON READER and a student of "THE LANGUAGE, SENTIMENT AND POETRY OF FLOWERS."

FERN, FLOWERING. Dreams.—See Osmunda regalis.

FROGGER. ICE PLANT. Your Looks Freeze Me.—See Ice-plant.

(To be continued.)

FACETIÆ.

Too late for the fair.—An old bachelor.

Lost, the buttons from a coat of paint.

"AFTER ME," as the needle said to the thread.

A good guess at a teller's name.—Mr. So-and-so.

WHY is a schoolmistress like the letter C? Because she makes classes of lasses.

MOTTO FOR A CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT.—

Bill Suckers beware.—Fun.

A DAY children have a perfect right to kick up a row on—A holler-day.—Judy.

Does a drunkard's reel ever lead to the St. Vins' dance?—Judy.

WHAT does the grocer do with all his things before he sells them? Gives them a weigh.

WHAT is the longest word in the English language? Smiles—because there is a mile between the first and the last letters.

A QUESTION is belogged when it is enveloped in misty.

HONEST industry has brought many a carpenter to the scaffold.

The spendthrift's prayer.—"Leave me a loan, will you?"

The first man who ever went round the world—the man in the moon.

AN unpleasant sort of arithmetic.—Division among families.

WHAT portions of the body are the best? The two wrists (tourists).

THE last performance that Samson gave literally brought down the house.

Is it any proof that logins has legs because it always stands to reason?

A CRACK invisible to the naked eye.—The crack of a whip.

WHEN is egg not an oval? When you turn it round.

A PIG is said to be the most provide ptot animals because he always carries a spare-rib or two about with him.

NATURAL-Historical-Comical.—Whether it is true that pigs can see the wind, we don't know. It is certain that it requires a fox to raise it.—Judy.

TO THE POINT.

WOULD-BE CONTRIBUTOR: "I wish you would tell me something to write about."

EDITOR: "Well, right about face."

AN advertiser wishes to meet with a house, etc., etc., which must be within a "stone's throw" of the Crystal Palace. It is pretty clear what he intends to be up to!

AD MISERA-CORD-IAM.—"Drop it! drop it!" howled a suffering miscreant under the lash at Newgate. He was accommodated even beyond his wish.—Fun.

CERTAINLY NOT.—A resident in a quiet suburb puts this insane query on the pillars flanking his garden gate, "Isabella Villa." He might have been more particular with regard to his punctuation.—Fun.

"I NEVER betrayed a friend's confidence," said one lady to another, by way of insinuation. "Very true," was the answer, "for you were never entrusted with it."

A CLEVELAND woman recently married a Chinese

laundryman, and three days after the unhappy Celestial appeared at a barber's shop, and ordered his pigtail cut off, saying in explanation, "Too much yank."

A RUSTIC youngster, being asked out to take tea with a friend, was admonished to praise the eatables. Presently the butter was passed to him, when he remarked, "Very nice butter—what there is of it," and observing a smile, he added, "and plenty of it—such as it is."

SUMMER DRILLS.—ALARM-SHOT, 1875.

INSPECTING OFFICER: "Arch! What the deuce is that man—ah—doing there?"

CAPTAIN: "Oh, he's only looking for his saddle, sir?"—Punch.

"Where did you get that hat, Jerry?"—"Borrowed it."—"Borrowed it?"—"Y-ess; borrowed it of a fellow asleep in the park. Bill Bowley borrowed his coat; Pat Gaffney his boots; I borrowed his hat; do you think I'd steal? No! I scorn the action."

GOT THROUGH THE WORST.

"Oh, Tommy, Tommy; do 'er try and be a better boy: if you don't, Satan will take hold of ye!"

"He can't take 'id 'order thanoy was tookt 'other day, of'm sure!"

"Ah, who took 'es, then?"

"Whoy, skulemaaster, in course."—Fun.

A LITTLE boy commences his composition on "The Horse" thus: "The horse is a very useful animal; it has four legs—one on each corner."

A DIMINUTIVE attorney, named Eise, once asked Jekyll, "Sir, I hear you called me a pettyfogge. Have you done so, sir?" "No, sir," said Jekyll, with a look of contempt. "I never said you were a pettyfogge or a scoundrel; but I did say you were little Eise."

"USED TO IT."

OFFICER AT FIRING-POINT (who thinks it's raining): "Sergeant Manchine, hadn't you better wear your great coat till it's your turn to fire?"

SERGEANT MANCHINE (frags the "Land of Lorne"): "Ho! No the moor! I'll pit on when it comes wat!"—Punch.

FOUR doctors tackled Johnnie Smith, They blustered and they bled him;

With squills and anti-bilious pills,

And ipecac, they fed him.

They stirred him up with calomel,

And tried to move his liver;

But all in vain—his little soul

Was waited o'er the river.

TIMON, the misanthrope, one day ascended the rostrum, and thus addressed the people: "Athenians, I have a small piece of ground on which I mean to build. There is a fig-tree in it which I must eat down. Several citizens have hanged themselves on this tree; and if any one of you have a desire to do the same, I now give you notice that you have not a moment to lose!"

CAUSE AND EFFECT.—A minister who had been reproving one of his elders for over-indulgence observed a cow go down to a stream, take a drink, and then turn away. "There," said he to his offending elder, "is an example for you; the cow has quenched its thirst, and has retired." "Yes," replied the other, "that is very true. But suppose another cow had come to the other side of the stream and had said, 'Here's to you,' there's no saying how long they might have gone on."

A PROPHECIBLE BEQUEST.—A man of Chicago, has published a book to prove that the world will be destroyed some time during the current year, and has demonstrated his own confidence in that opinion by bequeathing all his property—including the copyright of his book—to a foundling asylum. We do not wish to create alarm, but surely the vaticinations of so prudent a seer are worthy of more than ordinary attention. The very essence of prophecy is the "taking thought for the morrow."

RATHER VAGUE.

"Eva, did you hear that lady's name that come to see mamma?"

"Yes, Mrs. Abel."

"I wonder if she's the mother of those two boys mamma told us of. And one of them was naughty, you know, and killed his brother."

"What nonsense, Eva! Why, that happened ever so long ago! If she's anybody, she must be their grandmother!"—Punch.

MUCH PUT OUT.—A porter in a country shop came to grief the other day. There are a large number of assistants about the place, and the proprietor has trained them into an amateur fire-brigade, the shop being supplied with hose pipes, buckets, and several fire-extinguishers. In case of fire, or even an alarm, this brigade do wonders. They did on this occasion. The porter referred to put a lighted pipe into his pocket, and in a few minutes there was a brisk fire in his coat, and the smell of burning and an alarm brought that well-trained brigade quickly to work. They discovered

the cause, but irritated at the insignificance of it, or thinking it easier to prove the principle of cause and effect, set to work on the porter. Several buckets of water were dashed upon him, two streams were soon playing upon the terrified fellow, and, to crown all, he was nearly suffocated with the extinguishers. In fact, that brigade refused to stop until each department of it had practised upon him for a few minutes. But he was put out—very much put out at the proceedings.

A GENTLEMAN who was trying to teach his dog some kind of a trick, lost all patience with the canine on account of his seeming stupidity. Giving up the lesson and looking at the animal as he stood by, intelligently wagging his tail, he said, in a tone of vexation, "Confounded dog! I don't know what to make of him." "I will tell you," said a friend who was present. "Well, what?" said the owner of the animal, a ray of hope lighting up his face. "Sausage," was the quiet answer. And still the owner of the dog was not satisfied.

MURRY MARGUER.

In spite of commoner and and
And Jew, with which it's tainted,
The tale of Thane's not so bad
By half as it is painted!
And now that Royalty has shed
A lustre o'er its actions,
The less about its errors said—
The greater its attractions.

The negroes and the German lands
Are louder still than ever;
And sneaky patronise the sands
With "holiday and ever."
Old ocean leaves the shelving shore
And sings a soothing dirge,
Delightful after all the roar
And bustle of the City!—Fun.

A GENTLEMAN in want of a housekeeper recently tried an odd experiment. He advertised on Monday for a lady of education and elegant manners, qualified to act as a companion as well as housekeeper, and was overwhelmed with replies. The only requirement in the advertisement of Wednesday was that the lady should be plain in features and a good housekeeper, but not a single applicant appeared to answer that appeal.

"FORWARDED, FORWARDED."

OUR REPORTER (before public dinner): "Beg pardon, my lord! But could your lordship kindly oblige me by giving me a hint as to what your lordship is going to say in reply to the duke, when his grace proposes your lordship's health?"

HIS LORDSHIP: "How can I tell you what I'm going to say until I've heard what the duke says?"

OUR REPORTER: "Oh, I can oblige your lordship with what his grace is going to say. I've got it all in my pocket!"—Punch.

A FEMALE "PAUL PEE."

An old lady, living in a back street, had passed so much of her time watching the affairs of her neighbours that she acquired the power of distinguishing the sound of every knocker within hearing. She felt ill, and was confined to her bed. Unable to observe in person what was going on without she stationed her maid at the window as a substitute for the performance of that duty.

"Betty, what are you thinking about? Don't you hear a double knock at No. 9? Who is it?"

"The first-floor lodger, ma'am."

"Betty, Betty! I declare I must give you warning. Why don't you tell me what that knock is at No. 54?"

"Why, ma'am, is only the baker with pies."

"Pie, Betty; what can they want with pies at 54? They had pies yesterday."

A ROMANCE OF THE "LORD WARDEN."

Or, "Then, and—Now!"

"Half-past eleven, is it? The boat don't leave till twelve, and the lady has gone up stairs to look after her trunks. Very well, waiter, then you can bring me a cigar and some soda-and-b."

Well, I'm glad it's smooth, for her sake; yes, for mine also, for she'd be sure to be ill, and a nice time I should have of it down in that stuffy cabin with her.

Lord Warden Hotel, Dover! Waiting for the night boat to take us the first stage of my new honeymoon. Bless me! and to think I should come to this sort of thing a second time! Ah, well, needs must when the—ahem!—drives, for I was awfully hard up. Strange, though, that the new start should be from this same hotel! stranger still that I should happen to get the very same room now I had then.

Yes, the very same room, with the same big window looking over the pier head, and the dark ocean beyond; the very same way the furniture was arranged, and—yes, I am sure I remember that

sofa-lounge in the window. Yes, the very self-same. Ah, dear, dear me! Yes, on this now old-fashioned couch she sat with me then, both those little hands in mine, the sweet face blanched in the silver moonlight, and the glistening eyes upturned to mine—oh, how tenderly! Ah, no, she did not leave me "just to make sure that the jewel case and the trousseau trunk, you know, were all right." She sat with me.

For long years how far off that time seemed, and now, here in this room, how it all comes back with a rush! Barely twelve years ago it was then, and now—ah me! poor, poor Nell!

How rough it was that night, but she stayed on the deck with me all through it, and liked it, she said. "For was not I there?"

There's the boat now getting up steam—perhaps the very same boat! There's the jolly old pier, and the move, I know, is the same. There's—yes, all, all the same now as then. Stay, all did I say—all? Ah, no, no! Poor little Nell! My poor darling!

Good gracious, Charles, what are you doing moping up there to the dark! We shall miss the boat! How extremely inconsiderate you are! Come along, do!—Judy.

THE FOWLER AND THE SNIPE.

A FABLE.

A FOWLER once, whose cruel sport
Was killing birds of every sort,
While entering the wood one day
Saw an old snipe beside the way.
Who cried, "Oh, fowler, prithee spare
My children! hear a mother's prayer!
So may the gods attend your own."
Moved by her supplicating tone
The fowler answered, "Be it so.
But, tell me, how am I to know
Which ones are yours? pray name a nest,
That I may know them from the rest."
"Ah!" said the mother, in her pride,
"You'd find it easy to decide
By this—a never-failing sign—
There's none so beautiful as mine!"
Alas the day! Ere set of sun
The fowler with his deadly gun
Had proved her warning all in vain.
A score of snipes the man had slain,
Which, when she saw, the parent bird
Bewailed with many a woful word.
"Poor little darlings, how they bleed!
How could you do the dreadful deed?"
"What! are they yours?" the fowler cried.
"Despite the test which I applied,
They are, as I can truly say,
The ugliest birds I've seen to-day!"
"Ah!" sighed the snipe, "be mine the blame;
Our eyes are clearly not the same,
And you and I alike forgot
That to a mother's partial thought
Her progeny are ever fair
And beautiful beyond compare!"—J. G. S.

GEMS.

To find recreation in amusements is not happiness; for this joy springs from alien and extrinsic sources, and is therefore dependent upon and subject to interruption by a thousand accidents, which may minister inevitable affliction.

BLESSED is the calamity that makes us humble; though so repugnant thereto is our nature, in our present state, that after awhile it is to be feared a second and sharper calamity would be wanted to cure us of our pride in having become so humble.

WITH regard to manner, be careful to speak in a soft, tender, kind and loving way. Even when you have occasion to rebuke, be careful to do it with manifest kindness. The effect will be immeasurably better.

If you venture to decide in a difference between two friends, be assured you will lose one of them; it is better to be an umpire in a dispute between your enemies, for, in that case, he in whose favour your decision is given may possibly become your friend.

THE QUAKER'S SALT.

OBADIAH JOHNSON was an esteemed member of the Society of Friends. At the same time he was a man of most fastidious and Epicurean tastes. Epicures are apt to be particular and critical and exacting in regard to all articles of food, and Obadiah was no exception to the rule. Especially was it very difficult to suit him in the matter of bread. A grain too much or too little of salt he fancied he could detect with unerring precision. "The bread is too salt," he had said day after day. Eventually, when he exclaimed as usual, "This bread is too salt," his good wife looked him tenderly in the face

and asked: "Obadiah, dost thou say that thou canst taste the salt in that bread?"

"Well," said Obadiah, "it tastes very different from what it would if there was no salt in it."

"Thou art mistaken," replied the wife, "I made that loaf on purpose, without a particle of salt in it!"

Bread, for a long time subsequently, ceased to be a subject of discussion in that household.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

WHY is cabbage rendered more wholesome and nutritious by being boiled in two waters? Because (according to Dr. Paris) cabbage contains an essential oil, which is apt to produce bad effects, and he recommends that they should be boiled in two successive waters till they are soft and digestible.

To prevent hard soap, prepared with soda, from crumbling, the bars may be dipped in a mixture of resin soap, beef tallow and wax.

A LITTLE camphine dropped between the neck and stopper of a glass bottle will render the latter easily removed if jammed fast.

To wash linen, put in the water a little dissolved pipeclay; it will give the dirtiest linens the appearance of having been bleached, and cleans them more thoroughly with one half the labour, and one fourth the soap.

If you get a fishbone in your throat, and sticking fast there, swallow an egg raw; it will be almost sure to carry down a bone easily and certainly. When, as sometimes happens by accident, corrosive sublimate is swallowed, the white of one or two eggs will neutralize the poison, and change the effect to that of a dose of calomel.

MISCELLANEOUS.

LET IT ALONE.—As a general rule, it is better to take little notice of foolish, or even malignant, gossip. Let it alone. By-and-bye those who go about retailing such stuff will grow weary, if not ashamed; perhaps they will feel disgust at their own baseness. If they are not noticed they will sink out of sight.

DESPONDENCY.—What is the cause of despondency? What is the meaning of it? The cause is a weak mind, and the meaning is sin. Nature never intended that one of her creatures should be a victim of a desire to feel and look the thunder-cloud. Never despond, for one of the first entrances of vice to the heart is made through the instrumentality of despondency. Although we cannot expect all our days and hours to be gilded as sunshine, we must not, for mere momentary griefs, suppose that they are to be enshrouded in the mists of misery, or clouded by the opacity of sorrows and misfortune.

MISPLACED FEAR.—All languages have a literature of terror about death. But living is far more terrible in reality than dying. It is life that fomenta pride, that inflames vanity, that excites the passions, that feeds the appetites, that founds and build habits, that establishes character, and, binding up the separate straws of action into one sheaf, hands it to the future saying: "As ye have sowed, so shall ye reap." And again: "As ye reap, so shall ye sow."

WHAT MEN NEED WIVES FOR.—It is not to sweep the house, make the beds, darn the socks, and cook the meals, chiefly that a man wants a wife. If this is all, when a young man calls to see a lady show him into the pantry to taste the bread and cake she has made, send him to inspect the needlework and bed-making, or put a broom in her hand, and send him to witness its use. Such things are very important, and the wise young man will quickly look after them; but what a true young man wants of a wife is her companionship, sympathy, and love. The way of life has many dreary places in it, and man needs a companion to go with him. A man is sometimes overtaken by misfortune; he meets with failure and defeat; temptations and trials beset him, and he needs one to stand by and sympathise. He has some hard battles to fight with poverty, and he needs a woman that, when he puts his arm around her, he feels that he has something to fight for, for she will help him to fight; that she will put her lips to his ear and whisper words of counsel, and put her hand to his heart and impart inspiration. All through life, through storms and through sunshine, conflict and victory, through adverse and through favouring winds, man needs a woman's love. A mother and a sister's love will hardly supply the need. Yet many seek for nothing further than success in housework. Justly enough, half of the kind get nothing more; the other half, surprised beyond measure, have gotten more than they sought, for their wives surprise them by bringing out a noble idea in marriage, and disclosing a treasury of sympathy, courage, and love.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. M. can obtain the song at Boosey's Musical Library, Helios Street, Oxford Street.

AN OLD MAID.—You mean the Egyptians; they formerly worshipped cats, and put a noble Roman to death for killing one by mistake.

T. B.—The word "cosack" is derived from "kosa," the Polish for goat, and was applied to the tribe so called on account of their wandering propensities and activity.

VIOLET.—It is very indiscreet for a young lady to go out for a walk with a young gentleman to whom she is not engaged, but who is actually engaged to another young lady.

GUNN-BURN.—The wife having left her home by a mutual understanding with her husband cannot sue for divorce unless she can prove any legitimate cause for such interference of the court.

Z.—The name of Ruth is a Hebrew name and means a vision of beauty. John, also from the Hebrew, means God's grace and God's gift. Mary means happiness, and George, from the Greek, means a cultivator.

AGRIC.—The engagement ring is worn on the forefinger of the left hand. It is a very useful custom, inasmuch as it saves admirers the pain and mortification of paying their addresses to ladies who are already engaged.

T. B. J.—The father can claim the child in spite of the agreement, because no such agreement is valid. A father cannot sell, make over, or give away his own offspring, and if he at one time assents to any bargain of any kind he may at another time revoke it.

R. J.—That must be a mistake, for history tells us that the last employment of torture in England was in 1640, when a man named Archer, accused of taking part in the attack on the Palace of Lambeth, was racked in the tower to make him discover his confederates.

CLARA.—"There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip," and about the only time it's pleasant to contemplate is when the hand of a loving wife has snied it at you because you had ventured to remark that there were matters more worthy of serious consideration than the trimming of a summer bonnet.

C. A.—Greenland was visited and settled by the Danes and Norwegians in the tenth century, but being neglected the inhabitants died, for when search was made for them in the seventh century none could be found. Still, it is asserted, that descendants of the first settlers are to be found in the far interior of the country.

N. D.—Depend upon it she had a reason—whether a good one or not we, of course, cannot say—for not introducing you to each other. You did well in not asking to be introduced, and we would advise you to continue silent on the subject. Time will, no doubt, explain to you the why and the wherefore of that omission.

FRED.—There is a fish which is used as a candle, and is caught on the coast of Alaska. It is about eight inches long and is almost transparent, and very fat, with a pure, white fat that is very sweet. The Indians dry this fish, then light it at the tail, and it burns with a clear, sparkling flame which no wind can extinguish.

C.—In Europe the tendency is to raise the standard of age at which marriages may be legally contracted. In Russia marriage cannot be legally contracted until the males are eighteen and the females sixteen; and in Denmark until the males are twenty and the females eighteen. Spanish youth may marry at fourteen and twelve, and it is the same in Greece and Hungary. In Italy it is sixteen and fifteen.

MABEL.—Walking out with a young man for a few weeks and then dismissing him to carry on in the same way with another, and doing that sort of thing over and over again, is not the way ever to get a husband worth having, nor indeed a husband of any sort. And what must those many young men with whom you have so carried on think and say of you? You must have made yourself pretty notorious by this time.

INQUIRER.—For the discovery of the stereoscope we are indebted to Professor Wheatstone. The professor's first stereoscope was composed of two small mirrors placed at an angle of 90 deg, and each reflecting to one eye one of the two binocular images. He afterwards constructed a refracting telescope, composed of two prisms of about 8 deg, each, placed between the eye and one picture, and reflecting the two images on one intermediate space, where they coincided.

AN OLD MAN.—1. The Arabs in the desert often live to be two hundred years old, and the age of hundred years and over is, in India, common. 2. Temperate men in

cities have, at twenty years of age, a chance of living forty years longer; intemperate men only fifteen. 3. The mortality in barracks and hospitals is four times greater on their shady than on their sunny side. 4. Sufficient sleep is indispensable, but, also, too much sleep impairs the health.

WALDEGRAVE is a gentleman who under a false name, and giving a false account of himself, commenced with a young lady that which he intended should be a mere flirtation, but which, on his part, and on the lady's also, he has reason to believe, has ripened into sincere love, and now he knows not how to set himself right with the lady, her parents, and others. We are obliged to tell Mr. "Waldegrave" that his conduct has been most reprehensible, and the best atonement he can now make will be a full confession of his original motives and intentions, to disclose his true name, at the same time giving a good proof that he is respectably connected, and humbly to implore that on account of his present sincerity, his past duplicity may be forgiven.

ALPHA.—What a true man wants with a wife is her companionship, sympathy and love. The way of life has many dreary places in it, and man needs a companion to go with him. A man is sometimes overtaken by misfortunes; he meets with failure and defeat; trials and temptations beset him, and he needs one to stand by and sympathize. He has some hard battles to fight with poverty, enemies, and with sin; and needs a woman that, when he puts his arm around her, he feels he has something to fight for; she will help him to fight; that will put her lips to his ear and whisper words of counsel, and her hand to his heart and impart inspiration. All through life, through storm and through sunshine, conflict and victory, through adverse and favouring winds, man needs a woman's love. The heart yearns for it. A sister's or a mother's love will hardly supply the need.

SAFE.

Safe? The battlefield of life
Seldom knows a pause in strife,
Every path is set with snares,
Every joy is crossed by cares.
Brightest morn. his quickest blight,
Steepest hill has but a transient gleam,
Love is but a passing dream,
Trust is folly's helpless waif.
Who dare call their dearest safe?

But through peril looms afar,
What hast thou to do with war?
Let the wild stream flood its brink,
There's no bark of thine to sink.
Let falsehood weave its subtle net,
Thou art dross with vain regret.
Let fortune frown, and friends grow strange,
Thou hast passed the doom of change.
We plan and struggle, mourn and chafe—
Safe, my darling, stand and safe! T. F. J.

TITILIBAT.—Clilo was the muse who presided over history. Niobe was one of the Pleiades and married to Amphion. She was very proud of her numerous and flourishing offspring, and thus provoked the anger of Apollo and Diana, who slew them all. She was herself changed by Jupiter into a rock, from which a rivulet, fed by her tears, continually pours. Ariadne was the daughter of Minos, King of Crete. Out of love to Theseus she gave him a clue of thread, which guided him out of the Cretan labyrinth, and he married her, but afterwards deserted her when she became a priestess of Bacchus. Juno was the sister and wife of Jupiter, and was supposed to preside over marriages, and to be the protector of married women. She is represented as the model of majestic beauty. Sappho was a Greek lyric poetess, who flourished about six hundred years before the Christian era.

OLIVE S., nineteen, tall dark and considered handsome wishes to correspond with a fair gentleman about twenty-one.

ADELS, eighteen, very tall, fair, considered handsome and good tempered wishes to correspond with a gentleman in business.

DARIS, nineteen, 5ft. 10in., fair, not bad looking, and would make a good husband, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony.

CLARA W. would like to correspond with a dark young man with a view to matrimony; she is fair, with blue eyes, and thinks she would be a loving wife to a steady young man.

THOMAS R., twenty-one, in a good position, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen, of medium height, with a view to matrimony; she must be good tempered, domesticated and loving.

R. L. M., twenty-six, medium height, blue eyes, a young gentleman in a good position, fond of home and music and well educated, would like to correspond with a young lady in Yorkshire with a view to matrimony.

MINNIE, nearly nineteen, medium height, fair complexion, light hair and gray eyes, refined and affectionate, would like to correspond with a young man; respondent must be tall, good looking, steady and amiable, age not to exceed twenty-three.

KATIE, nineteen and a half, short, dark, thoroughly domesticated, musical and well educated, would like to correspond with a respectable young man about twenty-five with a view to matrimony; he must be in comfortable circumstances and good looking.

LOUISA EMMA, twenty-three, medium height, a brunette, cheerful and fond of home, wishes to correspond with a steady young man about thirty with a view to marriage; tradesman preferred; a widow without family not objected to; she has no money.

BELLA and KATE, two friends, wish to correspond with two young men. Bella is between sixteen and seventeen, fair and has blue eyes. Kate is eighteen, fair, and has gray eyes; they are both well educated and respectably connected. Respondents must be handsome.

FLORENCE, twenty-one, rather tall, with dark brown eyes, massive head of hair and merry-looking face, is at present a lady's companion, well educated, domesticated and good pianist; would like to correspond with a gentleman who is tall and with a moderate income.

L. ZIELE and KATE would like to correspond with two

respectable gentlemen. Lizzie is twenty-five, fair, and loving disposition. Kate is seventeen, fair, rather tall. Respondents must be about the same age, tall, and in a good position; residents in or near Wolverhampton preferred.

LOUKEY NELL, twenty-six, medium height, fair, domesticated and fond of music, would like to correspond with a tall and rather dark gentleman about her own age or not more than thirty-three; must be respectable, in a good position, steady, fond of home and of a loving disposition.

EMMA JANE and LIZZIE, two sisters, would like to correspond with two respectable young men. Emma Jane is twenty-four, medium height, dark brown hair and eyes, would make a loving wife. Lizzie is twenty, little below medium height, light brown hair, blue eyes, fresh colour, rather plain looking but very cheerful, would make a loving wife.

CATHERINE MOLL, and MARY H. wish to correspond with two seamen in Her Majesty's Navy, both of good height. Catherine Moll is twenty, light complexion, highly respectable and rather good looking. Mary H. is eighteen, dark complexion and highly respectable and rather good looking; both very steady and want to get a comfortable home.

J. H. C. and A. A. Z., both signalmen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony; the respondents must be good looking and domesticated. J. H. C. is twenty-three, 5ft. 7in., hazel eyes and black curly hair. A. A. Z. is twenty-five, 5ft. 9in., auburn hair, dark blue eyes; both have a tendency for music and dancing.

TWO SISTERS wish to correspond with two sailors with a view to matrimony, being tired of single life. Maudie is twenty, 5ft. 6in., with lovely dark brown hair and eyes, is considered good looking and is thoroughly domesticated and of a loving and affectionate disposition. Gertrude is twenty-one, about 5ft. 6in., very dark hair, light blue eyes, not bad looking, thoroughly domesticated, kind hearted and fond of home. Respondents must be good looking, with dark curly hair and blue eyes, about twenty-one or twenty-two, and of medium height.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.

M. T. is responded to by—Mary, twenty-one, tall and domesticated.

MABEL by—A. B. H., twenty-nine, dark, medium height, with an income of \$1 a year.

F. F. by—Kate H., nineteen, fair, with blue eyes loving disposition and domesticated.

H. W. S. by—Louise F., twenty, tall, has dark brown hair, blue eyes, pretty and of a loving disposition.

MAR by—Jennie, nineteen, medium height, considered respectable, good tempered and can play the piano.

MARY by—ALICE H., nineteen, medium height, considered good looking; thinks she is all that Harry requires.

A. L. C. by—W., a seaman in the Royal Navy, twenty-seven, tall, considered handsome, and fond of dancing.

ANNIE by—Herbert W., twenty, and travels in the ironmongery trade; she is just the young lady H. W. could love.

JOANNE by—Jessie, tall, fair, considered nice looking, is loving, fond of home, and well educated and would make him a good wife.

RONALD by—Marianne, considered nice looking, with brown hair and blue eyes, and will have money; she is quiet and thinks she is all Ronald requires.

W. M. W. by—Mossros, seventeen, small, regular features, long golden-brown hair, large dark gray eyes, not very good teeth, but is loving and a good housekeeper, is her own dressmaker, and thinks she is all W. M. W. requires.

LEICESTER DODSON by—Blue-eyed Nellie, nineteen, considered good looking, with golden hair, of a loving disposition and a knowledge of housekeeping and would strive to make a home happy.

S. by—Patty, fair hair, dark eyes, and clear complexion, very nice looking, good company and good vocalist; she is very fond of travelling about, and would like to go with him on some of his voyages.

POSTIOR LORRA by—Endochia, tall, dark hair and eyes, good figure, with a loving heart, very fond of music; she would make him a good wife, and hopes that his love of home would be as fervent as her own.

AUGUSTUS by—Annie Hope, who believes she is all that he requires; she is an orphan, has a little independent property under her own control, is considered good looking, a loving heart, and would make any man she loved a good wife; does not object to settle in America, providing Augustus's love is equal to her own.

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